SAMANTHA
AMONG THE BRETHEREN

-or-

"The Upholdin' Of The Meetin'House"

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SAMANTHA

AMONG THE BRETHREN

BY

"JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE"

(MARIETTA HOLLEY)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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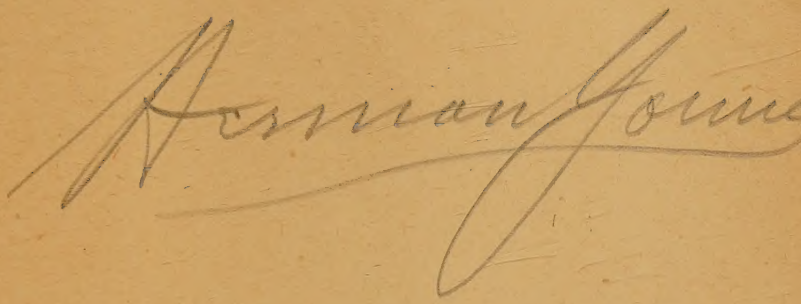


TO

All Women

WHO WORK, TRYING TO BRING INTO DARK LIVES
THE BRIGHTNESS AND HOPE OF A
BETTER COUNTRY,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

"SAMANTHA"

PREFACE.

GAIN it came to pass, in the fullness of time, that my companion, Josiah Allen, see me walk up and take my ink-stand off of the manteltry piece, and carry it with a calm and majestick gait to the corner of the settin'-room table devoted by me to literary pursuits. And he sez to me: "What are you goin' to tackle now, Samantha?"

And sez I, with quite a good deal of dignity, "The Cause of Eternal Justice, Josiah Allen."

"Anythin' else?" sez he, lookin' sort o' oneasy at me. (That man realizes his shortcomin's, I believe, a good deal of the time, he duz.)

"Yes," sez I, "I lay out in petickuler to tackle the Meetin' House. She is in the wrong on't, and I want to set her right."

Josiah looked sort o' relieved like, but he sez out, in a kind of a pert way, es he set there a-shellin' corn for the hens:

"A Meetin' House hadn't ort to be called she—it is a he."

And sez I, "How do you know?"

And he sez, "Because it stands to reason it is. And I'd like to know what you have got to say about him, anyway?"

Sez I, "That 'him' don't sound right, Josiah Allen. It sounds more right and nateral to call it 'she.' Why," sez I, "hain't we always hearn about the Mother Church, and don't the Bible tell about the Church bein' arrayed like a bride for her husband? I never in my life hearn it called a 'he' before."

"Oh, wall, there has always got to be a first time. And I say it sounds better. But what have you got to say about the Meetin' House, anyway?"

"I have got this to say, Josiah Allen. The Meetin' House hain't a-actin' right about wimmen. The Founder of the Church wuz born of woman. It wuz on a woman's heart that His head wuz pillowed first and last. While others slept she watched over His baby slumbers and His last sleep. A woman wuz His last thought and care. Before dawn she wuz at the door of the tomb, lookin' for His comin'. So she has stood ever sense—waitin', watchin', hopin', workin' for the comin' of Christ. Workin', waitin' for His comin' into the hearts of tempted wimmen and tempted men—fallen men and fallen wimmen—workin', waitin', toilin', nursin' the baby good in the hearts of a sinful world—weepin' pale-faced over its crucefixion—lookin' for its reserection. Oh, how she has worked all through the ages!"

"Oh, shaw!" sez Josiah, "some wimmen don't care about anythin' but crazy-work and back-combs."

I felt took down, for I had been riz up, quite considerable, but I sez, reasonable:

"Yes, there are such wimmen, Josiah, but think of the sweet and saintly souls that have given all their lives and hopes and thoughts to the Meetin' House—think of the throngs to-day that crowd the aisles of the Sanctuary—there are five wimmen to one man, I believe, in all the meetin'-houses to-day a-workin' in His name. True Daughters of the King, no matter what their creed may be—Catholic or Protestant.

"And while wimmen have done all this work for the Meetin' House, the Meetin' House ort to be honerable and do well by her."

"Wall, hain't he?" sez Josiah.

"No, she hain't," sez I.

"Wall, what petickuler fault do you find? What has he done lately to rile you up?"

Sez I, "She wuz in the wrong on't in not lettin' wimmen set on the Conference."

"Wall, I say he wuz right," sez Josiah. "He knew, and I knew, that wimmen wuzn't strong enough to set."

"Why," sez I, "it don't take so much strength to set as it duz to stand up. And after workin' as hard as wimmen have for the Meetin' House, she ort to have the priveledge of settin'. And I am goin' to write out jest what I think about it."

"Wall," sez Josiah, as he started for the barn with the hen feed, "don't be too severe with the Meetin' House."

An then, after he went out, he opened the door ag'in and stuck his head in, and sez:

"Don't be too hard on him."

And then he shet the door quick, before I could say a word.

But good land! I didn't care. I knew I could say what I wanted with my faithful pen—and I am bound to say it.

JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE,
Bonny View,
near Adams, New York.

Oct. 14th, 1890.

Samantha Among the Brethren.

BY JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN I first heard that wimmen wuz goin' to make a effort to set on a Conference, it wuz on a Wednesday, as I remember well. For my companion, Josiah Allen, had drove over to Loontown in a Democrat and in a great hurry, to meet two men who wanted him to go into a speculation with 'em.

And it wuz kinder curius to meditate on it that they wuz all deacons, every one on 'em. Three on 'em wuz Baptis'es, and two on 'em had j'ined our meetin'-house, deacons, and the old name clung to 'em—we spoze because they wuz such good, stiddy men, and looked up to.

Take 'em all together there wuz five deacons. The two foreign deacons from 'way beyond Jonesville, Deacon Keeler and Deacon Huffer, and our own three Jonesvillians—Deacon Henzy, Deacon Sypher, and my own petickuler Deacon, Josiah Allen.

It wuz a wild and hazardous skeme that them two foreign deacons wuz a-proposin', and I wuz strongly in favor of givin'

'em a negative answer; but Josiah wuz fairly crazy with the idee, and so wuz Deacon Henzy and Deacon Sypher (their wives told me how they felt).

The idee wuz to build a buzz-saw mill on the creek that runs through Jonesville, and have branches of it extend into Zoar.

As near as I could get it into my head there wuz to be a buzz-saw mill apiece for the five deacons—each one of 'em to overlook their own petickuler buzz-saw—but the money comin' from all on 'em to be divided up equal among the five deacons.

They thought there wuz lots of money in the idee. But I wuz very set against it from the first. It seemed to me that to have buzz-saws a-permeatin' the atmosphere, as you may say, for so wide a space would make too much of a confusion and noise, to say nothin' of the jarrin' that would take place and ensue. I felt more and more, as I meditated on the subject, that a buzz-saw, although estimable in itself, yet it wuz not a spear in which a religious deacon could withdraw from the world, and ponder on the great questions pertainin' to his own and the world's salvation.

I felt it was not a spear that he could revolve round in and keep that apartness from this world and nearness to the other that I felt that deacons ought to cultivate.

But my idees wuz frowned at by every man in Jonesville when I ventured to promulgate 'em. They all said, "The better the man, the better the deed."

They said, "The better the man wuz, the better the buzz-saw he would be likely to run."

The fact wuz, they needed some buzz-saw mills bad, and wuz very glad to have these deacons lay holt of 'em.

But I threw out this question at 'em, and stood by it, "If bein' set apart as a deacon didn't mean anything? If there wuzn't any deacon-work that they ought to be expected to do—and if it wuz right for 'em to go into any world's work so wild and hazardous and engrossin' as this enterprise?"

And again they sez to me in stern, decided axents, "The better the man, the better the deed. We need buzz-saws."

And then they would turn their backs to me and stalk away very high-headed.

And I felt that I wuz a-gettin' fearfully onpopular all through Jonesville by my questions. I see that the hull community wuz so sot on havin' them five deacons embark onto these buzz-saws that they would not brook any interference, least of all from a female woman.

But I had a feelin' that Josiah Allen wuz, as you may say, my lawful prey. I felt that I had a right to question my own pardner for the good of his own soul and my piece of mind.

And I sez to him in solemn axents:

"Josiah Allen, what time will you get when you are fairly started on your buzz-saw for domestic life or social or for religious duties?"

And Josiah sez, "Dumb 'em! I guess a man is a-goin' to make money when he has got a chance."

And I asked him plain if he had got so low, and if I had lived with him twenty years for this, to hear him in the end dumb religious duties.

And Josiah acted skairt and conscience-smut for most half a minute, and said he "didn't dumb 'em."

"What wuz you dumbin'?" sez I, coldly.

"I wuz dumbin' the idee," sez he, "that a man can't make money when he has a chance to."

But I sez, a-haulin' up this strong argument ag'in:

"Every one of you men who are a-layin' holt of this enterprise and a-embarkin' onto this buzz-saw are married men, and are deacons in a meetin'-house. Now, this work you are a-talkin' of takin' up will devour all of your time, every minute of it, that you can spare from your farms.

"And to say nothin' of your wives and childern not havin' any chance of havin' any comfort out of your society. What

"WHAT WUZ YOU DUMBIN'?"

will become of the interests of Zion at home and abroad, of foreign and domestic missions, prayer-meetin's, missionary societies, temperance meetin's and good works generally?"

And then again I thought, and it don't seem as if I can be mistaken, I most know that I heerd Josiah Allen mutter in a low voice:

"Dumb good works!"

But I wouldn't want this told of, for I may be mistook. I didn't fairly ketch the words, and I spoke out ag'in, in dretful meanin' and harrowin' axents, and sez:

"What will become of all this gospel work?"

And Josiah had by this time got over his skair and conscience-smite (men can't keep smut for more'n several minutes, anyway, their consciences are so elastic; good land! rubber cord can't compare with 'em), and he had collected his mind all together, and he spoke out low and clear, and in a tone as if he wuz fairly surprised I should make the remark:

"Why, the gospel work will get along jest as it always has—the wimmen will 'tend to it."

And I own I was kinder lost and by the side of myself when I asked the question—and very anxious to break up the enterprise or I shouldn't have put the question to him.

For I well knew jest as he did that wimmen wuz most always the ones to go ahead in church and charitable enterprises. And especially now, for there wuz a hardness arozen amongst the male men of the meetin'-house, and they wouldn't do a thing they could get out of (but of this more anon and bimeby).

There wuz two or three old males in the meetin'-house, too old to get mad and excited easy, that held firm, and two very pious old male brothers, but poor, very poor, had to be supported by the meetin'-house, and lame. They stood firm, or as firm as they could get on such legs as theirs wuz—inflammatory rheumatiz and white swellin's and such.

But all the rest had got their feelin's hurt, and got mad, etc., and wouldn't do a thing to help the meetin'-house along.

Wall, I tried every lawful, and mebby a little onlawful, way to break this enterprise of theirs up—and, as I heern afterwards, so did Sister Henzy.

Sister Sypher is so wrapped up in Deacon Sypher that she would embrace a buzz-saw mill or any other enterprise he could bring to bear onto her.

"She would be perfectly willin' to be trompled on," so she often sez, "if Deacon Sypher wuz to do the tromplin'."

Some sez he duz.

Wall, in spite of all my efforts, and in spite of all Sister Henzy's efforts, our deacons seemed to jest flourish on this skeme of theirn. And when we see it wuz goin' to be a sure thing, even Sister Sypher begin to feel bad.

She told Albina Widrig, and Albina told Miss Henn, and Miss Henn told me, that "what to do she didn't know, it would deprive her of so much of the deacon's society." It wuz goin' to devour so much of his time that she wuz afraid she couldn't stand it. She told Albina in confidence (and Albina wouldn't want it told of, nor Miss Henn, nor I wouldn't) that she had often been obleeged to go out into the lot between breakfast and dinner to see the deacon, not bein' able to stand it without lookin' on his face till dinner-time.

And when she was laid up with a lame foot it wuz known that the deacon left his plowin' and went up to the house, or as fur as the door-step, four or five times in the course of a mornin's work, it wuz spozed because she wuz fearful of forgettin' how he looked before noon.

She is a dretful admirin' woman.

She acts dretful reverential and admirin' towards men—always calls her husband "the Deacon," as if he was the one lonely deacon who was perambulatin' the globe at this present time. And it is spozed that when she dreams about him

she dreams of him as "the Deacon," and not as Samuel (his given name is Samuel).

But we don't know that for certain. We only spoze it. For the land of dreams is a place where you can't slip on your sunbonnet and foller neighbor wimmen to see what they are a-doin' or what they are a-sayin' from hour to hour.

No, the best calculator on gettin' neighborhood news can't even look into that land, much less foller a neighborin' female into it.

No, their barks have got to be moored outside of them mysterious shores.

But, as I said, this had been spozen.

But it is known from actual eyesight that she marks all her sheets and napkins and piller-cases and such "M. D. S." And I asked her one day what the M stood for, for I spozed, of course, the D. S. stood for Drusilly Sypher.

And she told me with a real lot of dignity that the initials stood for "Miss Deacon Sypher."

"Wall, the Jonesville men have been in the habit of holdin' her up as a pattern to their wives for some time, and the Jonesville wimmen hain't hated her so bad as you would spoze they all would under the circumstances, on account, we all think, of her bein' such a good-hearted little creeter. We all like Drusilly and can't help it.

Wall, even she felt bad and deprested on account of her deacon's goin' into the buzz-saw mill business.

But she didn't say nothin', only wept out at one side, and wiped up every time he came in sight.

They say that she hain't never failed once of a-smilin' on the deacon every time he came home. And once or twice he has got as mad as a hen at her for smilin'. Once, when he came home with a sore thumb—he had jest smashed it in the barn door—and she stood a-smilin' at him on the door-step, there are them that say the deacon called her a "infernal fool."

But I never have believed it. I don't believe he would demean himself so low.

But he yelled out awful at her, I do spoze, for his pain wuz intense, and she stood stun still, a-smilin' at him, jest accordin' to the story-books. And he sez:

"Stand there like a —— fool, will you! Get me a rag!"

I guess he did say as much as that.

But they say she kept on a-smilin' for some time—couldn't seem to stop, she had got so hardened into that way.

And once, when her face wuz all swelled up with the toothache, she smiled at him accordin' to rule when he got home, and they say the effect wuz fearful, both on her looks and the deacon's acts. They say he wuz mad again, and called her some names.

But as a general thing they get along first-rate, I guess, or as well as married folks in general, and he makes a good deal of her. I guess they get along without any more than the usual amount of difficulties between husbands and wives, and mebby with less. I know this, anyway, that she jest about worships the deacon.

Wall, as I say, it wuz the very day that these three deacons went to Loontown to meet Deacon Keeler and Deacon Huffer, to have a conference together as to the interests of the buzz-saw mill that I first heard the news that wimmen wuz goin' to make a effort to set on the Methodist Conference, and the way I heerd on't wuz as follows:

Josiah Allen brought home to me that night a paper that one of the foreign deacons, Deacon Keeler, had lent him. It contained a article that wuz wrote by Deacon Keelerses son, Casper Keeler—a witherin' article about wimmen's settin' on the Conference. It made all sorts of fun of the projeck.

We found out afterward that Casper Keeler furnished nearly all the capital for the buzz-saw mill enterprise at his father's urgent request.

His father, Deacon Keeler, didn't have a cent of money of his own; it fell onto Casper from his mother and aunt. They had kept a big millinery-store in the town of Lyme, and a branch store in Loontown, and wuz great workers, and had laid up a big property. And when they died, the aunt bein' a maiden woman at the time, the money naturally fell onto Casper. He wuz a only child, and they had brung him up tender, and fairly worshiped him.

They left him all the money, but left a anuety to be paid yearly to his father, Deacon Keeler, enough to support him.

The deacon and his wife had always lived happy together—she loved to work, and he loved to have her work, so they had similar tastes, and wuz very congenial—and when she died he had the widest crape on his hat that wuz ever seen in the town of Lyme. (The crape was some she had left in the shop.)

He mourned deep, both in his crape and his feelin's, there hain't a doubt of that.

Wall, Miss Keelerses will provided money special for Casper to be educated high. So he went to school and to college from the time he was born almost. So he knew plenty of big words, and used 'em fairly lavish in this piece. There wuz words in it of from six to seven syllables. Why, I hadn't no idee till I see 'em with my own eye that there wuz any such words in the English language, and words of from four to six syllables wuz common in it.

His father, Deacon Keeler, wouldn't give the paper to my companion, he thought so much of it, but he offered to lend it to him, because he said he felt that the idees it promulgated wuz so sound and deep they ought to be disseminated abroad.

The idees wuz "that wimmen hadn't no business to set on the Conference. She wuz too weak to set on it. It wuz too high a place for her to ventur' on, or to set on with any ease. There wuzn't no more than room up there for what men would love to set on it. Wimmen's place wuz in the sacred precinks

of home. She wuz a tender, fragile plant that needed guardin' and guidin' and kep' by man's great strength and tender care from havin' any cares and labors whatsoever and wheresoever and howsumever."

Josiah said it wuz a masterly dokument. And it was writ well. It painted in wild, glarin' colors the fear that men had that wimmen would strain themselves to do anything at all in the line of work—or would weaken her hull constitution, and lame her moral faculties, and ruin herself by tryin' to set up on a Conference, or any other high and tottlin' eminence.

The piece wuz divided into three different parts, with a headin' in big letters over each one.

The first wuz, wimmen to have no labors and cares WHATSOEVER.

Secondly, NONE WHERESOEVER.

Thirdly, NONE HOWSUMEVER.

The writer then proceeded to say that he would show first what cares and labors men wuz willin' and anxious to ward offen women. And he proved right out in the end that there wuzn't a thing that they wanted wimmen to do—not a thing.

Then he proceeded to tell where men wuz willin' to keep their labors and cares offen wimmen. And he proved it right out that it wuz everywhere. In the home, the little sheltered, love-guarded home of the farmer, the mechanic and the artisan (makin' special mention of the buzz-sawyers). And also in the palace walls and the throne. There and everywhere men would fain shelter wimmen from every care and every labor, even the lightest and slightest.

Then lastly came the howsumever. He proceeded to show how this could be done. And he proved it right out (or thought he did) that the first great requisit' to accomplish all this wuz to keep wimmen in her place. Keep her from settin' on the Conference and all other tottlin' eminences fitted only for man's stalwart strength.

And the end of the article wuz so sort o' tragick and skairful that Josiah wept when he read it. He pictured it out in such strong colors, the danger of puttin' wimmen, or allowin' her to put herself, in such a high and precipitous place, such a skairful and dangerous posture as settin' up on a Conference.

"To have her set up on it," sez the writer, in conclusion, "would endanger her life, her spiritual, her mental and her moral growth. It would shake the permanency of the sacred home relations to its downfall. It would hasten anarchy, and, he thought, sizm."

Why, Josiah Allen handled that paper as if it wuz pure gold. He asked me anxiously, as he handed it to me to read, if my hands wuz perfectly clean, and we had some words about it.

And till he could pass it on to Deacon Sypher to read he kep' it in the Bible. He put it right over in Galatians, for I looked to see—Second Galatians.

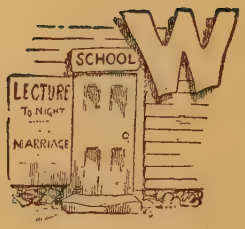
And he wrapped it up in a soft handkerchief when he carried it over to Deacon Sypherses. And Deacon Sypher treasured it like a pearl of great price (so I spoze) till he could pass it on to Deacon Henzy. And Deacon Henzy was to carry it with care to a old male Deacon in Zoar, bed-rid.

Wall, as I say, that is the very first I had read about their bein' any idee promulgated of wimmens settin' up on the Conference. And I, in spite of Josiah Allen's excitement, wuz in favor on't from the very first.

Yes, I wuz awfully in favor of it, and all I went through durin' the next and ensuin' weeks didn't put the idee out of my head. No, far from it. It seemed as if the severer my sufferin's wuz, the much more this idee flourished in my soul. Jest as a heavy plow will meller up the soil so white lilies can take root, or any other kind of sweet posies.

And oh, my heart! wuz not my sufferin's with Lodema Trumble a hard plow and a harrowin' one, and one that turned up deep furrows? But of this more anon and bimeby.

CHAPTER II.



WALL, it wuz on the very next day—on a Thursday, as I remember well, for I wuz a-thinkin' why didn't Lodema's letter come the next day—Fridays bein' considered onlucky, and it bein' a day for punishments, hangin's, and so forth.

But it didn't come on a Thursday. And my companion had been to Jonesville and brung me back two letters; he brung 'em in, leavin' the old mair standin' at the gate, and handed me the letters, ten pounds of granulated sugar, a pound of tea, and the request I should have supper on the table by the time that he got back from Deacon Henzy's.

(On that old buzz-saw business ag'in, so I spozed, but wouldn't ask.)

Wall, I told him supper wuz begun, anyway, and he had better hurry back. But he wuz belated by reason of Deacon Henzy's bein' away, so I set there for some time alone.

Wall, I wuz goin' to have some scolloped oysters for supper, so the first thing I did wuz to put 'em into the oven—they wuz all ready, I had scolloped 'em before Josiah come, and got 'em all ready for the oven—and then I set down and read my letters.

Wall, the first one I opened wuz from Lodema Trumble, Josiah's cousin on his own side. And her letter brought the sad and harrowin' intelligence that she wuz a-comin' to make us a good long visit. The letter had been delayed. She wuz

a-comin' that very night or the next day. Wall, I sithed deep. I love company dearly, but—oh, my soul! is there not a difference, a difference in visitors?

Wall, suffice it to say I sithed deep, and opened the other letter, thinkin' it would kind o' take my mind off.

And for all the world! I couldn't hardly believe my eyes. But it wuz! It wuz from Serena Fegg. It wuz from the authoress of "Wedlock's Peaceful Repose."

I hadn't heard a word from her for upwards of four years. And the letter brung me startlin' intelligence.

It opened with the onexpected information that she wuz married. She had been married three years and a half to a butcher out to the Ohio.

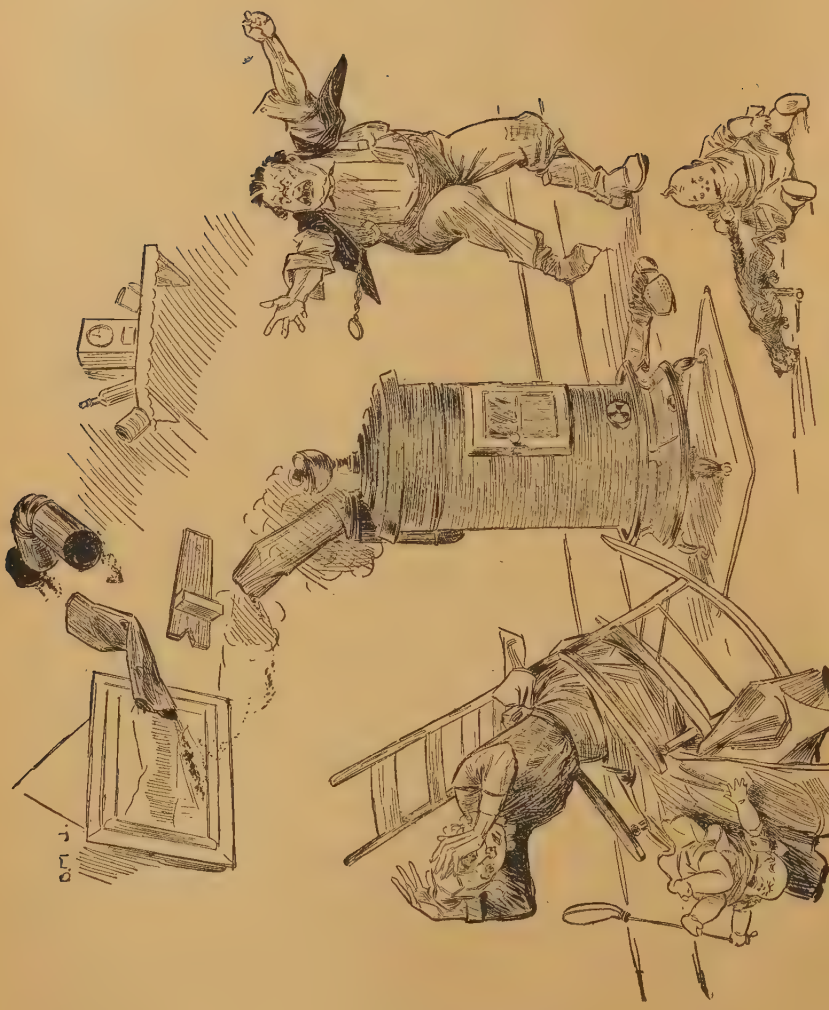
And I declare my first thought wuz as I read it, "Wall, she has wrote dretful flowery on wedlock, and its perfect, onbroken calm and peaceful repose, and now she has had a realizin' sense of what it really is."

But when I read a little further I see what the letter wuz writ for. I see why, at this late date, she had started up and writ me a letter. I see it wuz writ on duty.

She said she had found out that I wuz in the right on't and she wuzn't. She said that when in the past she had disputed me right up and down, and insisted that wedlock wuz a state of perfect serenity, never broken in upon by any cares or vexations whatsumever, she wuz in the wrong on't.

She said she had insisted that when anybody had moored their barks into that haven of wedded life, that they wuz forever safe from any rude buffetin's from the world's waves; that they wuz exempt from any toil, any danger, any sorrow, any trials whatsumever. And she had found she wuz mistook.

She said I told her it wuz a first-rate state, and a satisfactory one for wimmen; but still it had its trials, and she had found it so. She said that I insisted its serenity wuz sometimes broken in upon, and she had found it so. The last day at my house



had tottled her faith, and her own married experience had finished the work. Her husband wuz a worthy man, and she almost worshiped him. But he had a temper, and he raved round considerable when meals wuzn't ready on time, and she havin' had two pairs of twins durin' her union (she comes from a family on her mother's side, so I had hearn before, where twins wuz contagious), she couldn't always be on the exact minute. She had to work awful hard; this broke in on her serenity.

Her husband devotedly loved her, so she said; but still, she said, his bootjack had been throwed voyalent where corns wuz hit onexpected.

Their souls was mated firm as they could be in deathless ties of affection and confidence, yet doors had been slammed and oaths emitted when clothin' rent and buttons tarried not with him.

Strange actions and demeanors had been displayed in hours of high-headedness and impatience, which had skaired her almost to death before gettin' accustomed to 'em.

The four twins broke in also on her waveless calm. They wuz lovely cherubs, and the four apples of her eyes. But they did yell at times, they kicked, they tore round and acted; they made work—lots of work. And one out of each pair snored. It broke up each span, as you may say. The snorin' filled each room devoted to 'em.

He snored, loud. A good man and a noble man he wuz, so she repeated it, but she found out too late—too late, that he snored. The house wuz small; she could not escape from snores, turn she where she would. She got tired out with her work days, and couldn't rest nights. Her husband, as he wuz doin' such a flourishin' business, had opened a cattle-yard near the house. She wuz proud of his growin' trade, but the bellerin' of the cattle disturbed her fearfully. Also the calves bleating and the lambs callin' on their dams.

It wuz a long letter, filled with words like these, and it ended up by saying that for years now she had wanted to write and tell me that I had been in the right on't and she in the wrong. I had been megum and she hadn't. And she ended by sayin', "God bless me and adoo."

The fire crackled softly on the clean hearth. The tea-kettle sung a song of welcome and cheer. The oysters sent out an agreeable atmosphere. The snowy table, set out in pretty china and glassware, looked invitin', and I set there comfortable and happy so peaceful in my frame that the events of the past, in which Serena Fogg had flourished, seemed but as yesterday.

I thought it all over, that pleasant evenin' in the past, when Josiah Allen had come in onexpected, and brung the intelligence to me that there wuz goin' to be a lectur' give that evenin' by a young female at the Jonesville school-house, and beset me to go.

And I give my consent. Then my mind traveled down that pleasant road, moon-gilded, to the school-house. It stopped on the door-step while Josiah hitched the mair.

We found the school-house crowded full, fur a female lecturer wuz a rarity, and she wuz a pretty girl, as pretty a girl as I ever see in my life.

And it wuz a pretty lectur', too, dretful pretty. The name of the lectur' wuz, "Wedlock's Peaceful and Perfect Repose."

A pretty name, I think, and it wuz a beautiful lectur', very, and extremely flowery. It affected some of the hearers awfully; they wuz all carried away with it. Josiah Allen wept like a child durin' the rehearsin' of it. I myself didn't weep, but I enjoyed it, some of it, first-rate.

I can't begin to tell it all as she did, 'specially after this length of time, in such a lovely, flowery way, but I can probably give a few of the heads of it.

It hain't no ways likely that I can give the heads half the

stylish, eloquent look that she did as she held 'em up, but I can jest give the bare heads.

She said that there had been a effort made in some directions to try to speak against the holy state of matrimony. The papers had been full of the subject, "Is Marriage a Failure, or Is It Not?"

She had even read these dretful words, "Marriage is a failure." She hated these words, she despised 'em. And while some wicked people spoke against this holy institution, she felt it her duty, as well as priveledge, to speak in its praise.

I liked it first-rate, I can tell you, when she went on like that. For no livin' soul can uphold marriage with a better grace than can she whose name wuz once Smith.

I love Josiah Allen, I am glad that I married him.

But at the same time my almost devoted love doesn't make me blind. I can see on every side of a subject, and although, as I said heretofore, and prior, I love Josiah Allen, I also love megumness, and I could not agree with every word she said.

But she went on perfectly beautiful—I didn't wonder it brought the school-house down—about the holy calm and perfect rest of marriage, and how that calm wuz never invaded by any rude cares.

How man watched over the woman he loved; how he shielded her from every rude care; kept labor and sorrow far, far from her; how woman's life wuz like a oneasy, roarin', rushin' river that swept along discontented and onsatisfied, moanin' and lonesome, until it swept into the calm sea of Repose—melted into union with the grand ocian of Rest, marriage.

And then, oh, how calm and holy and sheltered wuz that state! How peaceful, how onruffled by any rude changes! Happiness, peace, calm! Oh, how sweet, how deep wuz the ocian of True Love in which happy, united souls bathed in blissful repose!

It was dretful pretty talk, and middlin' affectin'. There wuzn't a dry eye in Josiah Allen's head, and I didn't make no objection to his givin' vent to his feelin's, only when I see him bust out a-weepin' I jest slipped my pocket-handkerchief 'round his neck and pinned it behind. (His handkerchief wuz in constant use, a-cryin' and weepin' as he wuz.) And I knew that salt-water spots black satin awfully. He had on a new vest.

Submit Tewksbury cried and wept, and wept and cried, caused by remembrances, it wuz spozed. Of which more anon and bimeby.

And Drusilly Sypher, Deacon Sypherses wife, almost had a spazzum, caused by admiration and bein' so highly tickled.

I myself didn't shed any tears, as I have said heretofore. And what kep' me calmer wuz I knew, I knew from the bottom of my heart, that she went too fur, she wuzn't megum enough.

And then she went on to draw up metafors and haul in illustrations, comparin' married life and single—jest as likely metafors as I ever see, and as good illustrations as wuz ever brung up, only they every one of 'em had this fault—when she got to drawin' 'em she drawed 'em too fur. And though she brought the school-house down, she didn't convince me.

Once she compared single life to a lonely goose travelin' alone acrost the country, 'cross lots, lonesome and despairin', travelin' along over a thorny way, and desolate, weighed down by melancholy and gloomy forebodin's, and takin' a occasional rest by standin' up on one cold foot and puttin' its weery head under its wing, with one round eye lookin' out for dangers that menaced it, and lookin', also, perhaps, for a possible mate, for the comin' gander—restless, wobblin', oneasy, miserable.

Why, she brought the school-house down, and got the audience all wrought up with pity and sympathy. Oh, how

Submit Tewksbury did weep; she wept aloud (she had been disappointed, but of this more bimeby).

And then she went on and compared that lonesome voyager to two blissful wedded ones. A pair of white swans floatin' down the waveless calm, bathed in silvery light, floatin' down a shinin' stream that wuz never broken by rough waves, bathed in a sunshine that wuz never darkened by a cloud.

And then she went on to bring up lots of other things to compare the two states to—flowery things and sweet and eloquent.

She compared single life to quantities of things, strange, weird, melancholy things and curius. Why, they wuz so powerful that every one of 'em brought the school-house down.

An then she compared married life to two apple-blossoms hangin' together on one leafy bough on the perfumed June air, floatin' back and forth under the peaceful benediction of summer skies.

And she compared it to two white lambs gambolin' on the velvety hillside. To two strains of music meltin' into one dulcet harmony, perfect, divine harmony, with no discordant notes.

Josiah hunched me, he wanted me to cry there, at that place, but I wouldn't. He did, he cried like an infant babe, and I looked close and searchin' to see if my handkerchief covered up all his vest.

He didn't seem to take no notice of his clothes at all, he wuz a-weepin' so—why, the whole school-house wept like a babe.

But I didn't. I see it wuz a eloquent and powerful effort. I see it wuz beautiful as anything could be, but it lacked that one thing I have mentioned prior and before this time. It lacked megumness.

I knew they wuz all impressive and beautiful illustrations, I couldn't deny it, and I didn't want to deny it. But I knew in my heart that the lonely goose that she had talked so

eloquent about, I knew that though its path might be tegus the most of the time, yet occasionally it stepped upon velvet grass and blossomin' daisies. And though the happy wedded swans floated considerable easy a good deal of the time, yet occasionally they had their wings rumpled by storms, thunderstorms, sudden squalls, and etcetery, etcetery.

And I knew the divine harmony of wedded love, though it is the sweetest that earth affords, I knew that, and my Josiah knew it—the very sweetest and happiest strains that earthly lips can sing.

Yet I knew that it wuz both heavenly sweet and divinely sad, blended discord and harmony. I knew there wuz minor chords in it as well as major. I knew that we must await love's full harmony in heaven. There shall we sing it with the pure melody of the immortals, my Josiah and me. But I am a-eppisodin', and to continue and resoom.

Wall, we wuz invited to meet the young female after the lectur' wuz over, to be introduced to her and talk it over.

She wuz the Methodist minister's wife's cousin, and the minister's wife told me she wuz dretful anxious to get my opinion on the lectur'. I spoze she wanted to get the opinion of one of the first wimmen of the day. For though I am fur from bein' the one that ort to mention it, I have heard of such things bein' said about me all 'round Jonesville and as fur as Loontown and Shackville. And so, I spoze, she wanted to get hold of my opinion.

Wall, I wuz introduced to her, and I shook hands with her, and kissed her on both cheeks, for she is a sweet girl and I liked her looks.

I could see that she wuz very, very sentimental, but she had a sweet, confidin', innocent look to her, and I give her a good kissin', and I meant it. When I like a person I do like 'em, and visy-versey.

But at the same time my likin' for a person mustn't be

strong enough to overthrow my principles. And when she asked me in her sweet axents how I liked her lectur', and if I could see any faults in it, I leaned up against duty, and told her, "I liked it first-rate, but I couldn't agree with every word of it."

Here Josiah Allen give me a look sharp enough to take my head clear off, if looks could behead anybody. But they can't.

And I kep' right on, calm and serene, and sez I, "It wuz very full of beautiful idees, as full of 'em as a rose-bush is full of sweetness in June, but," sez I, "if I speak at all I must tell the truth, and I must say that while your lectur' is as sweet and beautiful a effort as I ever see tackled, full of beautiful thoughts and eloquence, still I must say that in my opinion it lacked one thing, it wuzn't mean enough."

"Mean enough?" sez she. "What do you mean?"

"Why," sez I, "I mean, mean temperature, you know, middleinness, megumness and whatever you may call it; you go too fur."

She said with a modest look "that she guessed she didn't, she guessed she didn't go too far."

And Josiah Allen spoke up, cross as a bear, and sez he, "I know she didn't. She didn't say a word that wuzn't gospel truth."

Sez I, "Married life is the happiest life in my opinion; that is, when it is happy. Some hain't happy, but at the same time the happiest of 'em hain't all happiness."

"It is," sez Josiah (cross and surly), "it is, too."

And Serena Fogg said, gently, that she thought I wuz mistaken, "she thought it wuz." And Josiah j'ined right in with her, and said:

"He knew it wuz, and he would take his oath to it."

But I went right on, and sez I, "Mebby it is in one sense the most peaceful; that is, when the affections are firm set and stabled it makes 'em more peaceful than when they are a-traip-

sin' round and a-wanderin'. But," sez I, "marriage hain't all peace."

Sez Josiah, "It is, and I'll swear to it."

Sez I, goin' right on, cool and serene, "The sunshine of true love gilds the pathway with the brightest radiance we know anything about, but it hain't all radiance."

"Yes, it is," sez Josiah, firmly, "it is, every mite of it."

And Serena Fogg sez, tenderly and amiably, "Yes, I think Mr. Allen is right; I think it is."

"Wall," sez I, in meanin' axents, awful meanin', "when you are married you will change your opinion, now you mark my word."

And she said, gently but persistently, "That she guessed she shouldn't; she guessed she was in the right of it."

Sez I, "You think when anybody is married they have got beyend all earthly trials, and nothin' but perfect peace and rest remains?"

And she sez, gently, "Yes, mem!"

"Why," sez I, "I am married, and have been for upwards of twenty years, and I think I ought to know somethin' about it; and how can it be called a state of perfect rest when some days I have to pass through as many changes as a comet, and each change a tegus one. I have to wabble round and be a little of everything, and change sudden, too.

"I have to be a cook, a stepmother, a housemaid, a church woman, a wet-nurse (lots of times I have to wade out in the damp grass to take care of wet chickens and goslin's). I have to be a tailoress, a dairymaid, a literary soarer, a visitor, a fruit-canner, a adviser, a soother, a dressmaker, a hostess, a milliner, a gardener, a painter, a surgeon, a doctor, a carpenter, a woman and more'n forty other things.

"Marriage is a first-rate state, and agreeable a good deal of the time; but it hain't a state of perfect peace and rest, and you'll find out it hain't if you are ever married."

But Miss Fogg said, mildly, "that she thought I wuz mistaken—she thought it wuz."

"You do?" sez I.

"Yes, mem," sez she.

I got up, and sez I, "Come, Josiah, I guess we had better be a-goin'." I thought it wouldn't do no good to argue any more with her, and Josiah started off after the mair. He had hitched it on the barn floor.

She didn't seem willin' to have me go; she seemed to cling to me. She seemed to be a good, affectionate little creetur. And she said she would give anything almost if she could rehearse the hull lectur' over to me, and have me criticise it. Sez she:

"I have heard so much about you, and what a happy home you have."

"Yes," sez I, "it is as happy as the average of happy homes, anyway."

And sez she, "I have heard that you and your husband wuz jest devoted to each other."

And I told her "that our love for each other wuz like two rocks that couldn't be moved."

And she said, "On these very accounts she fairly hankered after my advice and criticism. She said she hadn't never lived in any house where there wuz a livin' man, her father havin' died several months before she wuz born; and she hadn't had the experience that I had, and she presumed that I could give her several little idees that she hadn't thought on."

And I told her, calmly, "that I presumed I could."

It seemed that her father died two months after marriage, right in the midst of the mellow light of the honeymoon, before he had had time to drop the exstatic sweetness of courtship and newly married bliss and come down into the ordinary, every-day, good and bad demeanors of men.

And she had always lived with her mother (who naturally

worshiped and mentally knelt before the memory of her lost husband) and three sentimental maiden aunts. And they had drawed all their knowledge of manhood from Moore's poems and Solomon's Songs. So Serena Fogg's idees of men and married life wuz about as thin and as well suited to stand the wear and tear of actual experience as a gauze dress would be to face a Greenland winter in.

And so, after considerable urgin' on her part (for I kinder hung back and hated to tackle the job, but not knowin' but that it wuz duty's call), I finally consented, and it wuz arranged this way:

She wuz to come down to our house some day, early in the mornin', and stay all day, and she wuz to stand up in front of me and rehearse the lectur' over to me, and I wuz to set and hear it, and when she came to a place where I didn't agree with her I wuz to lift up my right hand, and she wuz to stop rehearsin', and we wuz to argue with each other back and forth and try to convince each other.

And when we got it all arranged Josiah and I set out for home, I calm in my frame, though dreadin' the job some.

CHAPTER III.

UT Josiah Allen wuz jest crazy over that lectur'—crazy as a loon. He raved about it all the way home, and he would repeat over lots of it to me. About "how a man's love wuz the firm anchor that held a woman's happiness stiddy; how his peaceful influence held her mind in a serene calm—a waveless repose; how tender men wuz of the fair sect, how they watched over 'em and held 'em in their hearts."

"Oh," sez he, "it went beyond anythin' I ever heard of. I always knew that men wuz good and pious, but I never realized how dumb pious they wuz till to-night."

"She said," sez I, in considerable dry axents—not so dry as I keep by me, but pretty dry—"no true man would let a woman perform any manuel labor."

"Wall, he won't. There ain't no need of your liftin' your little finger in emanuel labor."

"Manuel, Josiah."

"Wall, I said so, didn't I? Hain't I always holdin' you back from work?"

"Yes," sez I. "You often speak of it, Josiah. You are as good," sez I, firmly, "full as good as the common run of men, and I think a little better. But there are things that have to be done. A married woman that has a house and family to see to and don't keep a hired girl can't get along without some work and care."

"Wall, I say," sez he, "that there hain't no need of you havin' a care, not a single care. Not as long as I live—if it wuzn't for me, you might have some cares, and most probable would, but not while I live."

I didn't say nothin' back, for I don't want to hurt his feelin's, and won't, not if I can help it. And he broke out again anon, or nearly anon:

"Oh, what a lectur' that wuz! Did you notice when she wuz goin' on perfectly beautiful about the waveless sea of married life—did you notice how it took the school-house down? And I wuz perfectly mortified to see you didn't weep or even clap your hands."

"Wall," sez I, firmly, "when I weep or when I clap, I weep and clap on the side of truth. And I can't see things as she duz. I have been a-sailin' on that sea she depictured for over twenty years, and have never wanted to leave it for any other waters. But, as I told her, and tell you now, it hain't always a smooth sea, it has its ups and downs, jest like any other human states."

Sez I, soarin' up a very little ways, not fur, for it wuz too cold, and I was too tired, "There hain't but one sea, Josiah Allen, that is calm forever, and one day we will float upon it, you and me. It is the sea by which angels walk and look down into its crystal depths and behold their blessed faces. It is the sea on whose banks the fadeless lilies blow, and that mirrors the soft, cloudless sky of the Happy Morning. It is the sea of Eternal Repose, that rude blasts can never blow up into billows. But our sea—the sea of married life—is not like that, it is ofttimes billowy and rough."

"I say it hain't," sez he, for he was jest carried away with the lectur', and enthused.

"We have had a happy time together, Josiah Allen, for over twenty years, but has our sea of life always been perfectly smooth?"

"Yes, it has; smooth as glass."

"Hain't there never been a cloud in our sky?"

"No, there hain't; not a dumb cloud."

Sez I, sternly, "There has in mine. Your wicked and profane swearin' has cast many and many a cloud over my sky, and I'd try to curb in my tongue if I was in your place."

"'Dumb' hain't swearin'," sez he. And then he didn't say nothin' more till anon, or nearly at that time, he broke out ag'in, and sez he:

"Never, never did I hear or see such eloquence till to-night. I'll have that girl down to our house to stay a week, if I'm a living Josiah Allen."

"All right," sez I, cheerfully. "I'd love to have her stay a week or ten days, and I'll invite her, too, when she comes down to rehearse her lectur'."

Wall, we got home middlin' tired, and the subject kinder dropped down, and Josiah had lots of work come on the next day, and so did I, and company. And it run along for over a week before she come. And when she did come, it wuz a dretful bad time. It seems as if she couldn't have come in a much worse time.

It wuz early one mornin', not more than nine o'clock, if it wuz that. There had come on a cold snap of weather onexpected, and Josiah wuz a-bringin' in the cook-stove from the summer kitchen when she come.

Josiah Allen is a good man. He is my choice out of a world full of men, but I can't conceal it from myself that his words at such a time are always voyalent, and his demeanor is not the demeanor that I would wish to have showed off to the public.

He wuz at the worst place, too. He had got the stove wedged into the entryway door, and couldn't get it either way. He had acted awkward with it, and I told him so, and he see it when it wuz too late.

He had got it fixed in such a way that he couldn't get into

the kitchen himself without gettin' over the stove, and I, in the course of duty, thought it wuz right to tell him that if he had heerd to me he wouldn't have been in such a fix. Oh, the voyalence and frenzy of his demeanor as he stood there a-hollerin'!

I wuz out in the wood-house shed a-b'ilin' my cider apple sass in the big cauldron kettle, but I heard the racket, and as I come a-runnin' in I thought I heard a little rappin' at the settin'-room door; but I didn't notice it much, I wuz that agitated to see the way the stove and Josiah wuz set and wedged in.

There the stove wuz, wedged firm into the doorway, perfectly sot there. There wuz sut all over the floor, and there stood Josiah Allen on the wood-house side, with his coat off, his shirt all covered with black, and streaks of black all over his face. And oh, how wild and almost frenzied his attitude wuz as he stood there as if he couldn't move nor be moved no more than the stove could! And oh, the voyalence of the language he hurled at me acrost that stove!

"Why," sez I, "you must come in here, Josiah Allen, and pull it from this side."

And then he hollered at me, and asked me:

"How in thunder he was goin' to get in." And then he wanted to know "if I wanted him squashed into jelly by comin' in by the side of it—or if I thought he wuz a crane, that he could step over it, or a stream of water that he could run under it, or what else do you think?" He hollered wildly.

"Wall," sez I, "you hadn't ort to got it fixed in that shape. I told you what end to move first," sez I. "You have moved it in sideways. It would go in all right if you had started it the other way."

"Oh, yes! It would have been all right. You love to see me, Samantha, with a stove in my arms. You love it dearly. I believe you would be perfectly happy if you could see me

"WALL, I WANT 'EM TO KETCH ME."

a-luggin' round stoves every day. But I'll tell you one thing, if this dumb stove is ever moved either way out of this door—if I ever get it into a room ag'in, it never shall be stirred ag'in so much as a hair's breadth—not while I have got the breath of life in me."

Sez I, "Hush! I hear somebody a-knockin' at the door."

"I won't hush. It is nothin' but dumb foolishness a-movin' round stoves, and if anybody don't believe it let 'em look at me—and let 'em look at that stove set right here in the door as firm as a rock."

Sez I ag'in in a whisper, "Do be still, and I'll let 'em in; I don't want 'em to ketch you a-talkin' so and a-actin'."

"Wall, I want 'em to ketch me, that is jest what I want 'em to do. If it is a man he'll say every word I say is gospel truth, and if it is a woman it will make her perfectly happy to see me a-swelterin' in the job—seven times a year do I have to move this stove back and forth, and I say it is high time I said a word. So you can let 'em in jest as quick as you are a-mind to."

Sez I, a-whisperin' and puttin' my finger on my lip:

"Won't you be still?"

"No, I won't be still!" he yelled out louder than ever. "And you may go through all the motions you want to, and you can't stop me. All you have got to do is to walk round and let folks in, happy as a king. Nothin' under the heavens ever made a woman so happy as to have some man a-breakin' his back a-luggin' round a stove."

I see he wouldn't stop, so I had to go and open the door, and there stood Serena Fogg, there stood the author of "Wedlock's Peaceful Repose." I felt like a fool. For I knew she had heard every word, I see she had by her looks. She looked skairt, and as surprised and sort o' awe-stricken as if she had seen a ghost. I took her into the parlor, and took her things, and I excused myself by tellin' her that I should have to be out

in the kitchen a-tendin' to things for a spell, and went to Josiah.

And I whispered to him, sez I, "Miss Fogg has come, and she has heard every word you have said, Josiah Allen. And what will she think now about 'Wedlock's Peaceful Repose?'"

But he had got that wild and reckless in his demeanor and acts that he went right on with his hollerin', and, sez he, "She won't find much repose here to-day, I'll tell her that. This house has got to be all tore to pieces to get that stove started."

Sez I, "There won't be nothin' to do only to take off one side of the door-casin'. And I believe it can be done without that."

"Oh, you believe! you believe! You'd better take holt and lug and lift for two hours as I have, and then see."

Sez I, "You hain't been here more'n ten minutes, if you have that. And there," sez I, liftin' up one end a little, "see what anybody can do who is calm. There I have stirred it, and now you can move it right along."

"Oh, you did it! I moved it myself."

I didn't contend, knowin' it wuz men's nater to say that.

Wall, at last Josiah got the stove in, but then the stovepipe wouldn't go together, it wouldn't seem to fit. He had marked the joints with chalk, and the marks had rubbed off, and he said I had rubbed 'em out.

I wuz jest as innocent as a babe, but I didn't dispute him much, for I see a crack open in the parlor door, and I knew the author of "Wedlock's Peaceful Repose" was a-listenin'.

But when he told me for the third time that I rubbed 'em out on purpose to make him trouble, and that I had made a practice of rubbin' 'em out for years and years—why, then I had to correct him on the subject, and we had a little dialogue.

I spoze Serena Fogg heard it. But human nater can't bear only jest so much, especially when it has stoves a-dirtien up the floor, and apple sass on its mind, and onexpected company, and no cookin' and a threshin'-machine a-comin'.

CHAPTER IV.

I NEVER knew a word about the threshin'-machine a-comin' till about half an hour before. Josiah Allen wuzn't to blame. It come just as onexpected onto him as it did onto me.

Solomon Gowdey wuz a-goin' to have 'em first, which would have left me ample time to cook up for 'em. But he wuz took down bed sick, so they had to come right onto us with no warnin' previous and beforehand.

They wuz a-drivin' up jest as Josiah got the stovepipe up. They had to go right by the side of the house, right by the parlor winders, to get to the side of the barn where they wanted to thresh; and jest as they wuz a-goin' by one of the horses got down, and of all the yellin' I ever heard that wuz the cap-sheaf.

Steve Yerden is rough on his horses, dretful rough. He yells at 'em enough to raise the ruff. His threshin'-machine is one of the kind where the horses walk up and look over the top. It is kinder skairful, anyway, and it made it as bad ag'in when you expected to see the horse fall out every minute.

Wall, that very horse fell out of the machine three times that day. It wuz a sick horse, I believe, and hadn't ort to have been worked. But three times it fell, and each time the yellin' wuz such that it skairt the author of "Peaceful Repose," and me, almost to death.

The machine wuz in plain sight of the house, and every time

we see the horse's head come a-mountin' up on top of the machine, we expected that over it would go. But though it didn't fall out only three times, as I said, it kep' us all nerved up and oneasy the hull of the time expectin' it. And Steve Yerden kep' a-yellin' at his horses all the time; there wuzn't no comfort to be took within a mile of him.

I wuz awful sorry it happened so, on her account.

Wall, I had to get dinner for nine men, and cook it all from the very beginnin'. If you'll believe it, I had to begin back to bread. I hadn't any bread in the house, but I had it a-risin', and I got two loaves out by dinner-time. But I had to stir round lively, I can tell you, to make pies and cookies and fried cakes, and cook meat and vegetables of all kinds.

The author of "Wedlock's Peaceful Repose" came out into the kitchen. I told her she might, if she wanted to, for I see I wuzn't goin' to have a minute's time to go into the parlor and visit with her.

She looked pretty sober and thoughtful, and I didn't know as she liked it, to think I couldn't do as I promised to do, accordin' to agreement, to hear her lectur', and lift my hand up when I differed from her.

But, good land! I couldn't help it. I couldn't get a minute's time to lift my hand up. I could have heard the lectur', but I couldn't spare my hands.

And then Josiah would come a-rushin' in after one thing and another, actin' as wuz natural, accordin' to the nater of man, more like a wild man than a Christian Methodist. For he wuz so wrought up and excited by havin' so much on his hands to do, and the onexpectedness of it, that he couldn't help actin' jest as he did act. I don't believe he could. And then Steve Yerden is enough to distract a leather man, anyway.

Twice I had to drop everything and find cloths to do up the horse's legs where it had grazed 'em a-fallin' out of he machine. And once I took my hands out of the pie-crust to

find a piece of old rope to tie up the harness. It seemed as if I left off every five minutes to wait on Josiah Allen to find somethin' that he wanted and couldn't find, or else to do somethin' for him that he couldn't do.

Truly, it was a wild and harrowin' time, and tegus. But I kep' a firm holt of my principles, and didn't groan—not when anybody could hear me. I won't deny that I did, out in the buttery by myself, give vent to a groan or two and a few sithes. But immegiately, or a very little after, I wuz calm ag'in.

Wall, worse things wuz a-comin' onto me, though I didn't know it. I owed a tin-peddler; had been owin' him for four weeks. I owed him twenty-five pounds of paper-rags for a new strainer. I had been expectin' him for over three weeks every day. But in all the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year there wuzn't another day that would satisfy him; he had got to come on jest that day, jest as I wuz fryin' my nut-cakes for dinner.

I tried to put him off till another day. But no! He said it wuz his last trip, and he must have his rags. And so I had to put by my work and lug down my rag-bag. His steel-yards wuz broke, so he had to weigh 'em in the house. It wuz a tegus job, for he wuz one of the petickuler kind, and had to look 'em all over before he weighed 'em, and pick out every little piece of brown paper or full cloth—everything, he said, that wouldn't make up into the nicest kind of writin'-paper.

And my steel-yards wuz out of gear, anyway, so they wouldn't weigh but five pounds at a time, and he wuz dretful petickuler to have 'em jest right by the notch.

And he would call on me to come and see jest how the steel-yards stood every time. (He wuz as honest as the day; I hain't a doubt of it.)

But it wuz tegus, fearful tegus and excitin'. Excitin', but not exhileratin', to have the floor all covered with rags of dif-

"BUT I KEP' CALM; I HAVE GOT GIANT SELF-CONTROL."

ferent shapes and sizes, no two of a kind. It wuz a curius time before he come, and a wild time, but what must have been the wildness and the curiosity when there wuz, to put a small estimate on it, nearly a billion of crazy-lookin' rags scattered round on the floor.

But I kep' calm; I have got giant self-control, and I used every mite of it, every atom of control I had by me, and kep' calm. I see I must—for I see that Miss Fogg looked bad; yes, I see that the author of "Wedlock's Peaceful Repose" wuz pretty much used up. She looked curius, curiuser than the floor looked, and that is goin' to the complete end of curiosity, and metafor.

Wall, I tussled along and got dinner ready. The tin-peddler had to stay to dinner, of course. I couldn't turn him out jest at dinner-time. And sometimes I almost think that he delayed matters and touzled round amongst them rags jest a purpose to belate himself, so he would have to stay to dinner.

I am called a good cook. It is known 'way out beyend Loontown and Zoar—it is talked about, I spoze. Wall, he stayed to dinner. But he only made fourteen; there wuz only thirteen besides him, so I got along. And I had a good dinner and enough of it.

I had to wait on the table, of course; that is, the tea and coffee. And I felt that a cup of good strong tea would be a paneky. I wuz that wore out and flustered that I felt that I needed a paneky to soothe.

And I got the rest all waited on and wuz jest a-liftin' my cup to my lips, the cup that cheers everybody, but don't inebriate 'em—good strong Japan tea, with cream in it. Oh, how good it smelt! But I hadn't fairly got it to my mouth when I wuz called off sudden before I had drinked a drop, for the case demanded help at once.

Miss Peedick had onexpected company come in jest as they wuz a-settin' down to the dinner-table, and she hadn't hardly

anything for dinner, and the company wuz very genteel—a minister and a justice of the peace—so she wanted to borrow a loaf of bread and a pie.

She is a good neighbor, and is one that will put herself out for a neighborin' female, and I went into the buttery almost on the run to get 'em for her, for her girl said she wanted to get 'em into the house and onto the table before Mr. Peedick come in with 'em from the horse-barn, for they knew that Mr. Peedick would lead 'em out to dinner the very second they got into the house, and Miss Peedick didn't want her husband to know that she had borrowed vittles, for he would be sure to let the cat out of the bag right at the table by speakin' about 'em and comparin' 'em with hern.

I see the necessity for urgent haste, and the trouble wuz that I hurried too much. In takin' down a pie in my awful hurry I tipped over a pan of milk right onto my dress. It wuz up high and I wuz right under the shelf, so that about three teacupfuls went down into my neck. But the most went onto my dress, about five quarts, I should judge, besides that that wuz tricklin' down my backbone.

Wall, I started Serintha Ann Peedick off with her ma's pie and bread, and then wiped up the floor as well as I could, and then I had to go and change my clothes. I had to change 'em clear through to my wrapper, for I wuz wet as sop—as wet as if I had been takin' a milk swim.

CHAPTER V.

ALL, the author of "Wedlock's Peaceful Repose" wuz a-waitin' for me to the table; the men had all got through and gone out. She sot right by me, and she had missed me, I could see. Her eyes looked bigger than ever, and more sad-like.

She said "she wuz dretful sorry for me," and I truly believed her.

She asked me in a awe-stricken tone, "if I had such trials every day?"

And I told her "No, I didn't." I told her that things would run along smooth and agreeable for days and days, but that when things got to happenin', they would happen right along for weeks at a time, sometimes, dretful curius. A hull batch of difficulties would rain down on anybody to once. Sez I, "You know Mr. Shakspere says that 'Sorrows never come a-spyin' along as single fighters, but they come in hull battles of 'em,' or words to that effect."

Sez I, in reasonable axents, "Mebby I shall have a hull lot of good things happen to me right along, one after another, some dretful agreeable days, and easy."

Sez she in the same sad axents, and wonderin', "Did you ever have another day in your hull life as hard as this you are a-passin' through?"

"Oh, yes," sez I, "lots of 'em—some worse ones, and," sez I, "the day has only jest begun yet, I presume I shall have lots

and lots of new things happen to me before night. Because it is jest as I tell you, when things get to happenin', there hain't no tellin' when they will ever stop."

Miss Fogg groaned a low, deep groan, and that is every word she said, only after a little while she spoke up, and sez:

"You hain't eaten a bit of dinner; it all got cold while you wuz a-changin' your dress."

"Oh, wall," sez I, "I can get along some way. And I must hurry up and get the table cleared off, anyway, and get to my work ag'in, for I have got to do a lot of cookin' this afternoon. It takes a sight of pies and cakes and such to satisfy twelve or a dozen men."

So I went to work vigorously ag'in. But well might I tell Miss Fogg "that the day had only jest begun, and there wuz time for lots of things to happen before night," for I had only jest got well to work on the ingregiences of my pies when Submit Tewksbury sent over "to see if I could let her have them sturchien-seeds I had promised her—she wanted 'em to run up the inside of her bedroom winder, and shade her through the winter. She wuz jest a-settin' out her winter stock of flower roots and seeds, and wanted 'em immegiately and to once; that is, if it wuz perfectly convenient," so the boy said.

Submit is a good creeter, and she wouldn't have put that burden on me on such a time for nothin', not if she had known my tribulations; but she didn't, and I felt that one trial more wouldn't, as the poet hath well said, "either make or break me."

So I went to huntin' for the seeds. Wall, it wuz a good half hour before I could find 'em, for, of course, it wuz natural nater, accordin' to the total deprivity of things, that I should find 'em in the bottom of the last bag of seeds that I overhauled.

But Submit had been disappointed, and I didn't want to

make her burdens any heavier, so I sent her the sturchien-seeds.

But it wuz a trial, I admit, to look over more than forty bags of garden and flower seeds in such a time as that. But I sent 'em. I sent Submit the sturchien-seeds, and then I laid to work ag'in fast as I possibly could.

But I sez to the author of "Peaceful Repose," I sez to her, sez I:

"I feel bad to think I hain't gettin' no time to hear you rehearse your lectur', but you can see jest how it is; you see I hain't had a minute's time to-day. Mebby I will get a few minutes' time before night; I will try to," sez I.

"Oh," sez she, "it hain't no matter about that; I—I—I, somehow—I don't feel like rehearsin' it as it was." Sez she, "I guess I shall make some changes in it before I rehearse it ag'in."

Sez I, "You lay out to make a more mean thing of it, more megum."

"Yes," sez she, in faint axents, "I am a-thinkin' of it."

"Wall," sez I, cheerfully, as I started for the buttery with a pile of cups in one hand, the caster and pickle-dish in the other, and a pile of napkins under my arm, "I believe I shall like it as well ag'in if you do, anyway," sez I, as I kicked away the cat that wuz a-clawing my dress, and opened the door with my foot, both hands bein' full.

"Anyway, there will be as much ag'in truth in it."

Wall, I went to work voyalently, and in two hours' time I had got my work quelled down some. But I had to strain nearly every nerve in the effort.

And I am afraid I didn't use the colporter just exactly right, who come when I wuz right in the midst of puttin' the ingregiences into my tea-cakes. I didn't enter so deep into the argument about the Revised New Testament as I should in easier and calmer times. I conversed considerable, I argued

some with him, but I didn't get so engaged as mebby I had ort to. He acted disappointed, and he didn't stay and talk more'n an hour and three quarters.

He generally spends half a day with us. He is a master hand to talk; he'll make your brain fairly spin round he talks so fast and handles such large, curius words. He talked every minute, only when I wuz a-answerin' his questions.

Wall, he had jest gone, the front gate had jest clicked onto him, when Miss Philander Dagget came in at the back door. She had her pressboard in her hand and a coat over her arm, and I see in a minute I had got another trial onto me. I see I had to set her right.

SHE IS APT TO GET THINGS WRONG.

I set her a chair, and she took off her sunbonnet and hung it over the back of her chair, and set down, and then she asked me if I had time to put in the sleeves of her husband's coat. She said "there wuz sunthin' wrong about 'em, but she didn't know what."

She said "she wouldn't have bothered me that day when I had so much round, but Philander had got to go to a funeral the next day, as one of the barriers, and he must have his coat."

Wall, I wrung my hands out of the dish-water they wuz in at the time, and took the coat and looked at it, and the minute I set my eyes on it I see what ailed it. I see she had got the sleeves sot in so the elbows come right in front of his arms, and

if he had wore it in that condition to the funeral or anywhere else he would have to fold up his arms right acrost his back; there wuzn't no other possible way.

And then I turned tailoress and helped her out of her trouble. I sot the sleeves in proper, and fixed the collar. She had got it sot on as a ruffle. I drawed it down smooth where it ort to be and pinned it—and she went home feelin' first-rate.

I am very neighborly and helpful, and am called so. Jonesville would miss me if anything should happen.

I have often helped that woman a sight. She is a good, willin' creeter, but she is apt to get things wrong, dretful apt. She made her little boy's pantaloons once wrong side before, so it would seem that he would have to set down from the front side, or else stand up.

And twice she got her husband's pantaloons sewed up so there wuz no way to get into 'em only to crawl up into 'em through the bottom of the legs. But I have always made a practice of rippin' and tearin' and bastin', and settin' her right, and I did now.

Wall, she hadn't hardly got out of the back door when Josiah Allen came in in awful distress; he had got a thorn in his foot. He had put on an old pair of boots, and there wuz a hole in the side of one of 'em, and the thorn had got in through the hole. It pained him dretfully, and he wuz jest as crazy as a loon for the time bein'. And he hollered the first thing that "he wanted some of Hall's salve." And I told him "there wuzn't a mite in the house."

And he hollered up and says, "There would be some if there wuz any sense in the head of the house."

I glanced up mechanically at his bald head, but didn't say nothin', for I see it wouldn't do. And he hollered out ag'in, "Why hain't ther any Hall's salve?"

Sez I, "Because old Hall has been dead for years and years, and hain't made any salve."

"OH, ARGUE AND DISPUTE WITH A DYIN' MAN!"

"Wall, he wouldn't have been dead if he had had any care took of him," he yelled out.

"Why," sez I, "he wuz killed by lightnin'; struck down entirely onexpected five years ago last summer."

"Oh, argue and dispute with a dyin' man! Gracious Peter! what will become of me?" he groaned out, a-holdin' his foot in his hand.

Sez I, "Let me put some Pond's Extract on it, Josiah."

"Pond's Extract!" he yelled, and then he called that good remedy words I wuz ashamed to hear him utter.

And he jumped round and pranced and kicked jest as it is the nater of a man to act under bodily injury of that sort. And then he ordered me to take a pin and get the thorn out, and then acted mad as a hen at me all the time I wuz a-doin' it; acted jest as if I wuz a-prickin' him a purpose.

He talked voyalent and mad. I tried to hush him down; I told him the author of "Wedlock's Peaceful Repose" would hear him, and he hollered back "he didn't care a cent who heard him. He wuz killed, and he shouldn't live to trouble anybody long if that pain kep' up."

His acts and words wuz exceedingly skairful to anybody who didn't understand the nater of a man. But I wuzn't moved by 'em so much as the width of a horse hair. Good land! I knew that jest as soon as the pain subsided he would be good as gold, so I kep' on, cool and collected, and got the thorn out, and did up the sufferin' toe in Pond's Extract, and I hadn't only jest got it done when, for all the world! if I didn't see a double team stop in front of the house, and peeked through the winder and see as it wuz the livery-stable man from Jonesville, and he had brung down the last straws to be lifted onto the camel's back—a hull lot of onexpected company. A hull load of 'em.

There wuz the Baptist minister and his wife and their three childern and the minister's wife's sister-in-law from the West,

who wuz there a-visitin', and the editor of the "Augur'ses" wife (she wuz related to the visitor from the West by marriage) and three of the twins. And old Miss Minkley, she wuz acquainted with the visitor's mother, used to go to school with her. And Drusilly Sypher, she wuz the visitor from the West's bosom friend, or used to be.

Wall, they had all come down to spend the afternoon and visit with each other, and with me and Josiah, and stay to supper.

CHAPTER VI.

BY this time the author of "Peaceful Repose" sez to me, and she looked pale and skairt; she had heard every word Josiah had said, and she wuz dretful skairt and shocked (not knowin' the ways of men, and not understandin', as I said prior and before, that in two hours' time he would be jest as good as the very best kind of pie, affectionate, and even spooney, if I would allow spoons, which I will not the most of the time). Wall, she proposed, Miss Fogg did, that she should ride back with the liveryman. And though I urged her to stay till night, I couldn't urge her as hard as I would otherwise, for by that time the head of the procession of visitors had reached the door-step, and I had to meet 'em with smiles.

I smiled some, I thought I must. But they wuz curius smiles, very strange-lookin' smiles, sort o' gloomy ones, and mournful-lookin'.

I have got lots of different smiles that I keep by me for different occasions (every woman has), and this wuz one of my most mournfullest and curiusest ones.

Wall, the author of "Wedlock's Peaceful and Perfect Repose" insisted on goin', and she went. And I sez to her, "That if she would come up some other day when I didn't have quite so much work around, I would be as good as my word to her about hearin' her rehearse the lectur'."

But she said, as she hurried out to the gate, lookin' pale an' wan (as wan ag'in as she did when she came, if not wanner):

"That she should make changes in it before she ever rehearsed it ag'in—deep changes."

And I should dare to presume to say that she did. Though, as I say, she went off most awful sudden, and I hadn't seen nor heard from her sence till I got this letter.

* * * * * * * * * *

Wall, jest as I got through with the authoresses letter and Lodema Trumble's, Josiah Allen came. And I hurried up the supper. I got it all on the table while I wuz a-steepin' my tea (it wuz good tea). And we sot down to the table happy as a king and his queen. I don't spoze queens make a practice of steepin' tea, but mebby they would be better off if they did—and have better appetites and better tea. Anyway, we felt well, and the supper tasted good. And though Josiah squirmed some when I told him Lodema wuz approachin' and would be there that very night or the next day—still the cloud wore away and melted off in the glowin' mellowness of the hot tea and cream, the delicious oysters and other good things.

My pardner, though, as he often says, is not a epicack, still he duz enjoy good vittles dretful well, and appreciates 'em. And I make a stiddy practice of doin' the best I can by him in this direction.

And if more females would foller on and cipher out this simple rule, and get the correct answer to it, the cramp in the right hands of divorce lawyers would almost entirely disappear.

For truly it seems that no human man could be more worrysome and curius and hard to get along with than Josiah Allen is at times; still, by stiddy keepin' of my table set out with good vittles from day to day, and year to year, the golden cord of affection has bound him to me by ties that can't never be broken into.

He worships me! And the better vittles I get, the more he thinks on me. For love, however true and deep it is, is still a

tumultous sea; it has its high tides and its low ones, its whirlpools and its calms.

He loves me a good deal better some days than he does others; I see it in his mean. And mark you! mark it well, female reader, these days are the ones that I cook up sights and sights of good food, and with a cheerful countenance and clean apron, set it before him in a bright room on a snowy table-cloth!

Great—great is the mystery of men's love.

I have often and often repeated this simple fact and truth that underlies married life, and believe me, dear married sisters, too much cannot be said about it by those whose hearts beat for the good of female and male humanity—and it cannot be too closely followed up and practised by female pardners.

But I am a-eppisodin'; and to resoom.

Wall, Lodema Trumble arrove the next mornin' bright and early—I mean the mornin' wuz bright, not Lodema—oh, no; fur from it. Lodema is never bright and cheerful—she is the opposite and reverse always.

She is a old maiden. I do think it sounds so much more respectful to call 'em so ruther than "old maid" (but I had to tutor Josiah dretful sharp before I could get him into it).

I guess Lodema is one of the regular sort. There is different kinds of old maidens, some that could marry if they would, and some that would but couldn't. And I ruther mistrust she is one of the "would-but-couldn'ts," though I wouldn't dast to let her know I said so, not for the world.

Josiah never could bear the sight of her, and he sort o' blamed her for bein' a old maiden. But I put a stop to that sudden, for sez I:

"She hain't to blame, Josiah."

And she wuzn't. I hain't a doubt of it.

Wall, how long she calculated to stay this time we didn't know. But we had our fears and forebodin's about it; for she

LODEMA.

wuz in the habit of makin' awful long visits. Why, sometimes she would descend right down onto us sudden and onexpected, and stay fourteen weeks right along—jest like a famine or a pestilence, or any other simely that you are a-mind to bring up that is tuckerin' and stiddy.

And she wuz disagreeable, I'll confess, and she wuz tuckerin', but I done well by her, and stood between her and Josiah all I could. He loved to put on her, and she loved to impose on him. I don't stand up for either on 'em, but they wuz at regular swords' p'ints all the time a'most. And it come fearful tuff on me, fearful tuff, for I had to stand the brunt on it.

But she is a disagreeable creeter, and no mistake. She is one of 'em that can't find one solitary thing or one solitary person in this wide world to suit 'em. If the weather is cold she is pinin' for hot weather, and if the weather is hot she is pantin' for zero.

If it is a pleasant day the sun hurts her eyes, and if it is cloudy she groans aloud and says "she can't see."

And no human bein' wuz ever known to suit her. She gets up early in the mornin' and puts on her specs, and goes out (as it were) a-huntin' up faults in folks. And she finds 'em, finds lots of 'em. And then she spends the rest of the day a-drivin' 'em ahead of her, and groanin' at 'em.

You know this world bein' such a big place and so many different sort o' things in it that you can generally find in it the petickuler sort of game you set out to hunt in the mornin'.

If you set out to hunt beauty and goodness, if you take good aim and are perseverin'—if you jest track 'em and foller 'em stiddy from mornin' till night, and don't get led away a-follerin' up some other game, such as meanness and selfishness and other such worthless head o' cattle—why, at night you will come in with a sight of good game. You will be a noble and happy hunter.

At the same time, if you hunt all day for faults you will

come in at night with sights of pelts. You will find what you hunt for, track 'em right along and chase 'em down.

Wall, Lodema never got led away from her petickuler chase. She jest hunted faults from mornin' till night, and done well at it. She brought in sights of skins.

But oh! wuzn't it disagreeable in the extreme to Samantha, who had always tried to bend her bow and bring down Beauty, to have her familiar huntin'-grounds turned into so different a war-path. It wuz disagreeable! It wuz! It wuz!

And then, havin' to stand between her and Josiah, too, wuz fearful wearin' on me. I had always stood there in the past, and now in this visit it wuz jest the same; all the hull time, till about the middle of the fifth week, I had to stand between their two tongues—they didn't fight with their hands, but fit with their tongues fearful.

CHAPTER VII.

UT along about the middle of the fifth week I see a change. Lodema had been oncommon exasperatin', and I expected she would set Josiah to goin', and I groaned in spirit, to think what a job wuz ahead of me, to part their two tongues—when all of a sudden I see a curius change come over my pardner's face. I remember jest the date that the change in his mean wuz visible and made known to me—for it wuz the very mornin' that we got the invitation to old Mr. and Miss Pressley's silver weddin'. And that wuz the fifteenth day of the month, along about the middle of the forenoon.

And it wuz not half an hour after Elnathen Pressley came to the door and give us the invitations that I see the change in his mean.

And when I asked him about it afterwards what that strange and curius look meant, he never hung back a mite from tellin' me, but sez right out plain:

"Mebby, Samantha, I hain't done exactly as I ort to by Cousin Lodema, and I have made up my mind to make her a happy surprise before she goes away."

"Wall," sez I, "so do."

I thought he wuz goin' to get her a new dress. She had been a-hintin' to him dretful strong to that effect. She wanted a parmetty or a balzereen or a circassien, which wuz in vogue in her young days. But I wuz in hopes he would get her a cashmere, and I told him so, plain.

But I couldn't get him to tell what the surprise wuz. He only sez, sez he:

"I am goin' to make her a happy surprise."

And the thought that he wuz a-goin' to branch out and make a change wuz considerable of a comfort to me. And I needed comfort—yes, indeed I did—I needed it bad. For not one single thing did I do for her that I done right, though I tried my best to do well by her.

But she found fault with my vittles from mornin' till night, though I am called a excellent cook all over Jonesville and all round the adjoining country, out as far as Loontown and Zoar. It has come straight back to me by them that wouldn't lie. But it hain't made me vain.

But I never cooked a thing that suited Lodema, not a single thing. Most of my vittles wuz too fresh, and then if I braced up and salted 'em extra, so as to be sure to please her, why then they wuz briny, and hurt her mouth.

Why, if you'll believe it, I give her a shawl, made her a present of it; it had even checks black and white; jest as many threads in the black stripes as there wuz in the white, for I counted 'em.

And she told me, after she had looked it all over, and said it wuz kinder thin and slazy, and checkered shawls had gone out of fashion, and the black looked some as if it would fade with washin', and the white wuzn't over clear, and the colors wuzn't no ways becomin' to her complexion, and etcetery, etcetery. "But," sez she, after she had got all through with the rest of her complaints, "if the white stripes wuz where the black wuz, and the black where the white wuz, she should like it quite well."

And there it wuz, even check, two and two.

Wall, that wuz a sample of her doin's. If anybody had a Roman nose she wanted a Greecy one. And if the nose wuz Greece, why, then she wanted Rome.

Why, Josiah sez to me along about the third week, he said (to ourselves in private), "that if Lodema went to heaven she would be dissatisfied with it, and think it wuz livelier and more goin' on down to the other place." And he said she would get the angels all stirred up a-findin' fault with their feathers.

I told him "I would not hear such talk."

"Wall," sez he, "don't you believe it?"

And I kinder turned him off, and wouldn't tell, and told him it wuz wicked to talk so.

"Wall," sez Josiah, "you dassent say she wouldn't."

And I dassent, though I wouldn't own it up to him, I dassent.

And if she kinder got out of other occupations for a minute durin' them first weeks she would be a-quarrelin' with Josiah Allen about age.

I spoze she and Josiah wuzn't fur from the same age, for they wuz childern together. But she wanted to make out she wuz young.

And she would tell Josiah that "he seemed jest like a father to her, and always had." And sometimes when she felt the most curius, she would call him "Father" and "Pa" and "Papa." And it would mad Josiah Allen so that I would have all I could do to quell him down.

Now, I didn't feel so. I didn't mind it so much. Why, there would be days, when she felt the curiusest, that she would call me "Mother" and "Ma," and foller me round with footstools and things when I went to set down, and would kinder worry over my fallin' off the back step, and would offer to help me up the suller stairs, and so forth, and watchin' over what I et, and tellin' me folks of my age ort to be careful, and not overeat.

And Josiah asked me to ask her "How she felt about that time?" For she wuz from three to four years older than I wuz.

"WE BOTH USED TO NUSS OUT OF THE SAME BOTTLE."

But I wouldn't contend with her, and the footstools come kinder handy, I had jest as lieve have 'em under my feet as not, and ruther. And as for rich vittles not agreein' with me, and my not overeatin', I broke that up by fallin' right in with her, and not cookin' such good things—that quelled her down, and gaulded Josiah, too.

But, as I said, it riled Josiah the worst of anything to have Lodema call him father, for he wants to make out that he is kinder young himself.

And sez he to her one day, about the third week, when she was a-goin' on about how good and fatherly he looked, and how much he seemed like a parent to her, and always had, sez he: "I wonder if I seemed like a father to you when we wuz a-kickin' at each other in the same cradle?" Sez he: "We both used to nuss out of the same bottle, anyway, for I have heard my mother say so lots of times. There wuzn't ten days' difference in our ages. You wuz ten days the oldest, as I have always made out."

She screamed right out, "Why, Josiah Allen, where is your conscience to talk in that way—and your heart?"

"In here, where everybody's is," sez Josiah, strikin' himself with his right hand—he meant to strike against his left breast, but struck too low, kinder on his stomach.

And sez I, "That is what I have always thought, Josiah Allen. I have always had better luck reachin' your conscience through your stomach than in any other way. And now," sez I, coldly, "do you go out and bring in a pail of water."

I used to get beat out and sick of their scufflin's and disagreein's, and broke 'em up whenever I could.

But oh! oh! how she did quarrel with Josiah Allen and that buzz-saw scheme of his'n. How light she made of that enterprise, how she demeaned the buzz, and run the saws—till I felt that bad as I hated the enterprise myself, I felt that a variety of loud buzz-saws would be a welcome relief from her tongue—

from their two tongues; for as fur down as she would run them buzz-saws, jest so fur would Josiah Allen praise 'em up.

She never agreed with Josiah Allen but in jest one thing while she was under his ruff. I happened to mention one day how extremely anxious I wuz to have females set on the Conference; and then, wantin' to dispute me, and also bein' set on that side, she run down the projeck, and called it all to nort—and when too late she see that she had got over on Josiah Allen's side of the fence.

But it had one good effect. When that man see she wuz there, he waded off, way out of sight of the projeck, and wouldn't mention it—it madded him so to be on the same side of the fence she wuz—so that it seemed to happen all for the best.

Why, I took her as a dispensation from the first, and drawed all sorts of morels from her, and sights of 'em—sights.

But oh, it wuz tuff on me, fearful tuff!

And when she calculated and laid out to make out her visit and go wuz more than we could tell.

LODEMA AND JOSIAH IN YOUTH.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOR two weeks had passed away like a nite-mair of the nite—and three weeks, and four weeks—and she didn't seem to be no nigher goin' than she did when she came.

And I would not make a move towards gettin' rid of her, not if I had dropped down in my tracts, because she wuz one of the relatives on his side.

But I wuz completely fagged out; it did seem, as I told Tirzah Ann one day in confidence, that I never knew the meanin' of the word "fag" before.

And Tirzah Ann told me (she couldn't bear her) that if she wuz in my place she would start her off. Sez she:

"She has plenty of brothers and sisters, and a home of her own, and why should she come here to torment you and father?" And sez she, "I'll talk to her, mother, I'd jest as leve as not."

Sez I, "Tirzah Ann, if you say a word to her, I'll—I'll never put confidence in you ag'in;" sez I, "Life is full of tribulations, and we must expect to bear our crosses;" sez I, "The old martyrs went through more than Lodema."

Sez Tirzah Ann, "I believe Lodema would have wore out John Rogers."

And I don't know but she would, but I didn't encourage her by ownin' it up that she would; but I declare for't, I believe she would have been more tegus than the nine childern, and the one at the breast, anyway.

Wall, as I said, it wuz durin' the fifth week that Josiah Allen turned right round, and used her first-rate.

And when she would talk before folks about how much filial affection she had for him, and about his always havin' been jest like a parent to her, and everything of the kind—he never talked back a mite, but looked clever, and told me in confidence, "That he had turned over a new leaf, and he wuz goin' to surprise her—give her a happy surprise."

And he seemed, instead of lovin' to rile her up, as he had, to jest put his hull mind on the idee of the joyful surprise.

Wall, I am always afraid (with reason) of Josiah Allen's enterprizes. But do all I could, he wouldn't tell me one word about what he wuz goin' to do, only he kep' it up, kep' a-sayin' that,

"It wuz somethin' I couldn't help approvin' of, and it wuz somethin' that would happify me, and be a solid comfort to her, and a great gain and honor."

So (though I trembled some for the result) I had to let it go on, for she wuz one of the relations on his own side, and I knew it wouldn't do for me to interfere too much and meddle.

Why, he did come right out one day and give hints to me to that effect.

Sez I, "Why, do you go on and be so secret about it? Why don't you tell your companion all about it what you are a-goin' to do, and advise with her?"

And he sez, "I guess I know what I am about. She is one of the relations on my side, and I guess I have got a few rights left, and a little spunk."

"Yes," sez I, sadly, "you have got the spunk."

"Wall," sez he, "I guess I can spunk up, and do somethin' for one of my own relations without any interference or any advice from any of the Smith family or anybody else."

Sez I, "I don't want to stop your doin' all you can for Lodema, but why not tell what you are a-goin' to do?"

"It will be time enough when the time comes," sez he. "You will find it out in the course of next week."

Wall, it run along to the middle of the next week. And one day I had jest sot down to tie off a comforter.

It wuz unbleached cheese-cloth that I had bought and colored with tea-leaves. It wuz a sort of a light mice color, a pretty soft gray, and I wuz goin' to tie it in with little balls of red zephyr woosted, and work it in buttonhole-stitch round the edge with the same.

It wuz for our bed, Josiah's and mine, and it wuz goin' to be soft and warm and very pretty, though I say it, that shouldn't.

It wuzn't quite so pretty as them that hain't colored. I had 'em for my spare beds, cream color tied with pale blue and pink, that wuz perfectly beautiful and very dressy; but I thought for every-day use a colored one would be better.

Wall, I had brought it out and wuz jest a-goin' to put it onto the frames (some new-fashioned ones I had borrowed from Tirzah Ann for the occasion).

And Cousin Lodema had jest observed, "that the new-fashioned frames with legs wuzn't good for nothin', and she didn't like the color of gray, it looked too melancholy, and would be apt to depress our feelin's too much, and would be tryin' to our complexions."

And I told her "that I didn't spoze there would be a very great congregation in our bedroom, as a general thing in the dead of night, to see whether it wuz becomin' to Josiah and me or not. And, it bein' as dark as Egypt, our complexions wouldn't make a very bad show, anyway."

"Wall," she said, "to tie it with red wuzn't at all appropriate, it wuz too dressy a color for folks of our age, Josiah's and mine. Why," sez she, "even I, at my age, would skurcely care to sleep under one so gay. And she wouldn't have a cheese-cloth comforter, anyway."

She sort o' stopped to ketch breath, and Josiah sez:

"Oh, wall, Lodema, a cheese-cloth comforter is better than none, and I should think you would be jest the one to like any sort of a frame on legs."

But I wunk at him, a real severe and warnin' wink, and he stopped short off, for all the world as if he had forgot bein' on his good behavior; he stopped short off, and went right to behavin', and sez he to me:

"Don't put on your comforter to-day, Samantha, for Tirzah Ann and Whitfield and the babe are a-comin' over here bime-by, and Maggie is a-comin', and Thomas Jefferson."

"Wall," sez I, "that is a good reason why I should keep on with it; the girls can help me if I don't get it off before they get here."

Then he sez, "Miss Minkley is a-comin', too, and the elder."

"Why'ee," sez I, "Josiah Allen, why didn't you tell me before, so I could have baked up somethin' nice? What a man you are to keep things; how long have you known it?"

"Oh, a week or so!"

"A week!" sez I; "Josiah Allen, where is your conscience, if you have got a conscience?"

"In the same old place," sez he, kinder hittin' himself in the pit of his stomach.

"Wall, I should think as much," sez I.

And Lodema sez, sez she, "A man that won't tell things is of all creeters that walks the earth the most disagreeable. And I should think the girls, Maggie and Tirzah Ann, would want to stay to home and clean house such a day as this is. And I should think a elder would want to stay to home so's to be on hand in case of anybody happenin' to be exercised in their minds, and wantin' to talk to him on religious subjects. And if I wuz a elder's wife I should stay to home with him; I should think it wuz my duty and my priveledge. And if I wuz a married woman I would have enough baked up in the house all the time, so's not to be afraid of company."

But I didn't answer back. I jest sot away my frames, and went out and stirred up a cake; I had one kind by me, besides cookies and jell tarts.

But I felt real worked up to think I hadn't heard.

Wall, I hadn't more'n got that cake fairly into the oven when the childern come, and Elder Minkley and his wife. And I thought they looked queer, and I thought the elder begun to tell me somethin', and I thought I see Josiah wink at him. But I wouldn't want to take my oath whether he wunk or not, but I thought he wunk.

I wuz jest a-turnin' this over in my mind, and a-carryin' away their things, when I glanced out of the settin'-room winder, and lo and behold! there wuz Abi Adsit a-comin' up to the front door, and right behind her wuz her Pa and Ma Adsit, and Deacon Henzy and his wife, and Miss Henn and Metilda, and Lute Pitkins and his wife, and Miss Petengill, and Deacon Sypher and Drusilly, and Submit Tewksbury—a hull string of 'em as long as a procession.

Sez I—and I spoke it right out before I thought—sez I:

"Why'ee!" sez I. "For the land's sake!" sez I, "has there been a funeral or anything? And are these the mourners?" sez I. "Are they stoppin' here to warm?"

For it wuz a cold day—and I repeated the words to myself mechanically, as it wuz, as I see 'em file up the path.

"They be mourners, hain't they?"

"No," sez Josiah, who had come in and wuz a-standin' by the side of me, as I spoke out to myself unbeknown to me—sez he in a proud axent:

"No, they hain't mourners, they are happyfiers; they are highlariers; they've come to our party. We are givin' a party, Samantha. We are havin' a diamond weddin' for Lodema."

"A diamond weddin'!" I repeated, mechanically.

"Yes, this is my happy surprise for Lodema."

I looked at Lodema Trumble. She looked strange. She

had sunk back in her chair. I thought she wuz a-goin' to faint, and she told somebody the next day "that she did almost lose her conscientiousness."

"Why," sez I, "she hain't married."

"Wall, she ort to be if she hain't," sez he. "I say it is high time for her to have some sort of a weddin'. Everybody is a-havin' 'em—tin and silver and wooden and basswood and glass and etc.—and I thought it wuz a perfect shame that Lodema shouldn't have none of no kind—and I thought I'd lay to and surprise her with one. Every other man seemed to be a-holdin' off, not willin' seemin'ly that she should have one, and I jest thought I would happify her with one."

"Wall, why didn't you make her a silver one or a tin?" sez I.

"Or a paper one?" screamed Lodema, who had riz up out of her almost faintin' condition. "That would have been much more appropriate," sez she.

"Wall, I thought a diamond one would be more profitable to her. For I asked 'em all to bring diamonds, if they brought anything. And then I thought it would be more suitable to her age."

"Why!" she screamed out. "They have to be married seventy-five years before they can have one."

"Yes," sez he, dreemily, "I thought that would be about the right figure."

Lodema wuz too mad to find fault or complain or anythin'. She jest marched up-stairs and didn't come down ag'in that night. And the young folks had a splendid good time, and the old ones, too.

Tirzah Ann and Maggie had brought some refreshments with 'em, and so had some of the other wimmen, and with what I had there wuz enough, and more than enough, to refresh ourselves with.

Wall, the very next mornin' Lodema marched down like a grenideer, and ordered Josiah to take her to the train. And

SHE JEST MARCHED UP-STAIRS.

she eat breakfast with her things on, and went away immegiately after, and hain't been back here sense.

And I wuz truly glad to see her go, but wuz sorry she went in such a way, and I tell Josiah he wuz to blame.

But he acts as innocent as you pleese. And he goes all over the arguments ag'in every time I take him to do about it. He sez "she wuz old enough to have a weddin' of some kind."

And, of course, I can't dispute that, when he faces me right down, and sez, "Hain't she old enough?"

And I'll say, kinder short, "Why, I spoze so!"

"Wall," sez he, "wouldn't it have been profitable to her if they had brought diamonds? Wouldn't it have been both surprisin' and profitable?" And sez he, "I told 'em expressly to bring diamonds if they had more then they wanted. I charged old Bobbet and Lute Pitkins specially on the subject. I didn't want 'em to scrimp themselves; but," sez I, "if you have got more diamonds than you want, Lute, bring over a few to Lodema."

"Yes," sez I, coldly, "he wuz dretful likely to have diamonds more than he wanted, workin' out by day's work to support his family. You know there wuzn't a soul you invited that owned a diamond."

"How did I know what they owned? I never have prowled round into their bureau draws and things, tryin' to find out what they had; they might have had quarts of 'em, and I not know it."

Sez I, "You did it to make fun of Lodema, and get rid of her. And it only makes it worse to try to smooth it over." Sez I, "I'd be honorable about it if I wuz in your place, and own up."

"Own up? What have I got to own up? I shall always say if my orders wuz carried out, it would have been a profitable affair for Lodema, and it would—profitable and surprisin'."

That's all I can get him to say about it, from that day to this.

CHAPTER IX.

UT truly the labors that descended onto my shoulders immegiately after Lodema's departure wuz hard enough to fill up my hull mind, and tax every one of my energies. Yes, my labors and the labors of the other female Jonesvillians wuz deep and arjuous in the extreme (of which more and anon bimeby).

I had been the female app'inted in a private and becomin' female way to go to Loontown to see the meetin'-house there that we heard they had fixed over in a cheap but commojous way. And for reasons (of which more and anon) we wanted to inquire into the expense, the looks on't, etc., etc.

So I persuaded Josiah Allen to take me over to Loontown on this pressin' business, and he gin his consent to go on the condition that we should stop for a visit to Cephas Bodleyses. Josiah stes store by 'em.

You see they are relations of ourn, and have been for some time, entirely unbeknown to us, and they'd come more'n a year ago a-huntin' of us up. They said they "thought relations ought to be hunted up and hanged together." They said "the idee of huntin' us up had come to 'em after readin' my books." They told me so, and I said, "Wall!" I didn't add nor diminish to that one "wall," for I didn't want to act too backward nor too forward. I jest kep' kinder neutral, and said, "Wall!"

You see Cephases father's sister-in-law wuz stepmother to my aunt's second cousin on my father's side. And Cephas said

that "he had felt more and more, as years went by, that it wuz a burnin' shame for relations to not know and love each other." He said "he felt that he loved Josiah and me dearly."

I didn't say right out whether it wuz reciprokated or not. I kinder said, "Wall!" ag'in.

And I told Josiah, in perfect confidence and the wood-house chamber, "that I had seen nearer relations than Mr. Bodleyses folks wuz to us."

Howsumever, I done well by 'em. Josiah killed a fat turkey, and I baked it, and done other things for their comfort, and we had quite a good time.

Cephas wuz ruther flowery and enthusiastick, and his mouth and voice ruther large, but he meant well, I should judge, and we had quite a good time.

She wuz very freckled, and a second-day Baptist by perswasion, and wuz piecin' up a crazy bedquilt. She went a-visitin' a good deal, and got pieces of the wimmen's dresses where she visited for blocks. So it wuz quite a savin' bedquilt, and very good-lookin', considerin'.

But to resoom and continue on. Cephases folks made us promise on our two sacred honors, Josiah's honor and mine, that we would pay back the visit, for, as Cephas said, "for relatives to live so clost to each other and not to visit back and forth wuz a burnin' shame and a disgrace." and Josiah promised that we would go right away after sugerin'.

We wouldn't promise on the New Testament, as Cephas wanted us to (he is dretful enthusiastick); but we gin good plain promises that we would go, and laid out to keep our two words.

Wall, we got there onexpected, as they had come onto us. And we found 'em plunged into trouble. Their only child, a girl, who had married a young lawyer of Loontown, had jest lost her husband with the typus, and they wuz a-makin' preparations for the funeral when we got there. She and her hus-

band had come on a visit, and he wuz too down bed-sick there and died.

I told 'em I felt like death to think I had descended down onto 'em at such a time.

But Cephas said he wuz jest dispatchin' a messenger for us when we arrove, for, he said, "in a time of trouble, then wuz the time, if ever, that a man wanted his near relations clost to him."

And he said "we had took a load offen him by appearin' jest as we did, for there would have been some delay in gettin' us there if the messenger had been dispatched."

He said "that mornin' he had felt so bad that he wanted to die—it seemed as if there wuzn't nothin' left for him to live for; but now he felt that he had somethin' to live for, now his relatives wuz gathered round him."

Josiah shed tears to hear Cephas go on. I myself didn't weep none, but I wuz glad if we could be any comfort to 'em, and told 'em so.

And I told Sally Ann, that wuz Cephases wife, that I would do anything I could to help 'em.

And she said everythin' wuz a-bein' done that wuz necessary. She didn't know of but one thing that wuz likely to be overlooked and neglected, and that wuz the crazy bedquilt. She said "she would love to have that finished to throw over a lounge in the settin'-room that wuz frayed out on the edges, and if I felt like it, it would be a great relief to her to have me take it right offen her hands and finish it."

So I took out my thimble and needle (I always carry such necessaries with me, in a huzzy made expressly for that purpose), and I sot down and went to piecin' up. There wuz seventeen blocks to piece up, each one crazy as a loon to look at, and it wuz all to set together.

She had the pieces, for she had been off on a visitin' tower the week before, and collected of 'em.

So I sot in quiet and the big chair in the settin'-room, and pieced up, and see the preparations goin' on round us.

I found that Cephases folks lived in a house big and showy-lookin', but not so solid and firm as I had seen.

It wuz one of the houses, outside and inside, where more pains had been took with the porticos and ornaments than with the underpinnin'.

It had a showy and kind of a shaky look. And I found that that extended to Cephases business arrangements. Amongst the other ornaments of his buildin' wuz mortgages, quite a lot of 'em, and of almost every variety. He had gin his only child, S. Annie (she wuz named after her mother, Sally Ann, but spelt it this way), he had gin S. Annie a showy education, a showy weddin', and a showy settin'-out. But she had had the good luck to marry a sensible man, though poor.

He took S. Annie and the brackets, the piano and hangin'-lamps and baskets and crystal bead lambrequins her father had gin her, moved 'em all into a good, sensible, small house, and went to work to get a practice and a livin'. He was a lawyer by perswasion.

Wall, he worked hard, day and night, for three little childern come to 'em pretty fast, and S. Annie consumed a good deal in trimmin's and cheap lace to ornament 'em; she wuz her father's own girl for ornament. But he worked so hard, and had so many irons in the fire, and kep' 'em all so hot, that he got a good livin' for 'em, and begun to lay up money towards buyin' 'em a house—a home.

He talked a sight, so folks said that knew him well, about his consumin' desire and aim to get his wife and childern into a little home of their own, into a safe little haven, where they could live if he wuz called away. They say that that wuz on his mind day and night, and wuz what nerved his hand so in the fray, and made him so successful.

Wall, he had laid up about nine hundred dollars towards a

home, every dollar on it earned by hard work and consecrated by his deathless hope and affection. The house he had got his mind on only cost about a thousand dollars. Loontown property is cheap.

Wall, he had laid up nine hundred, and wuz a-beginnin' to save on the last hundred, for he wouldn't run in debt a cent, anyway, when he wuz took voyalent sick there to Cephases; he and S. Annie had come home for a visit of a day or two, and he bein' so run down and weak with his hard day-work and his night-work, that he suckumbed to his sickness, and passed away the day before I got there.

Wall, S. Annie wuz jest overcome with grief the day I got there, but the day follerin' she begun to take some interest and help her father in makin' preparations for the funeral.

The body wuz embalmed, accordin' to Cephases and S. Annie's wish, and the funeral wuz to be on the Sunday follerin', and on that Cephas and S. Aunie bent their energies.

To begin with, S. Annie had a hull suit of clear crape made for herself, with a veil that touched the ground; she also had three other suits commenced, for more common wear, trimmed heavy with crape, one of which she ordered for sure the next week, for she said, "she couldn't stir out of the house in any other color but black."

I knew jest how dear crape wuz, and I tackled her on the subject, and sez I:

"Do you know, S. Annie, these dresses of your'n will cost a sight?"

"Cost?" sez she, a-bustin' out a-cryin'. "What do I care about cost? I will do everything I can to respect his memory. I do it in remembrance of him."

Sez I, gently, "S. Annie, you wouldn't forget him if you wuz dressed in white. And as for respect, such a life as his, from all I hear of it, don't need crape to throw respect on it; it commands respect, and gets it from everybody."

"But," sez Cephas, "it would look dretful odd to the neighbors if she didn't dress in black." Sez he in a skairful tone, and in his intense way:

"I would ruther resk my life than to have her fail in duty in this way; it would make talk. And," sez he, "what is life worth when folks talk?"

I turned around the crazed block and tackled it in a new place (more luny than ever it seemed to me), and sez I, mekanickly:

"It is pretty hard work to keep folks from talkin'; to keep 'em from sayin' somethin'."

But I see from their looks it wouldn't do to say anythin' more, so I had to set still and see it go on.

At that time of year flowers wuz dretful high, but S. Annie and Cephas had made up their minds that they must have several flower-pieces from the city nighest to Loontown.

One wuz a-goin' to be a gate ajar, and one wuz to be a gate wide open, and one wuz to be a big book. Cephas asked what book I thought would be preferable to represent. And I mentioned the Bible.

But Cephas sez, "No, he didn't think he would have a Bible; he didn't think it would be appropriate, seein' the deceased wuz a lawyer." He said "he hadn't quite made up his mind what book to have. But, anyway, it wuz to be in flowers—beautiful flowers." Another piece wuz to be his name in white flowers on a purple background of pansies. His name wuz Wellington Napoleon Bonaparte Hardiman. And I sez to Cephas:

"To save expense, you will probable have the moneygram W. N. B. H.?"

"Oh, no," sez he.

"Sez I, "Then the initials of his given names, and the last name in full."

"Oh, no," he said; "it wuz S. Annie's wish, and hisen, that

HE DIDN'T CARE FOR EXPENSE.

the hull name should be put on. They thought it would show more respect."

I sez, "Where Wellington is now, that hain't a-goin' to make any difference, and," sez I, "Cephas, flowers are dretful high this time of year, and it is a long name."

But Cephas said ag'in that he didn't care for expense so long as respect wuz done to the memory of the deceased. He said that he and S. Annie both felt that it wuz their wish to have the funeral go ahead of any other that had ever took place in Loontown or Jonesville. He said that S. Annie felt that it wuz all that wuz left her now in life, the memory of such a funeral as he deserved.

Sez I, "There is his childern left for her to live for," sez I. "Three little bits of his own life, for her to nourish and cherish and look out for."

"Yes," sez Cephas, "and she will do that nobly, and I will help her. They are all goin' to the funeral, too, in deep-black dresses." He said "they wuz too little to realize it now, but in later and maturer years it would be a comfort to 'em to know they had took part in such a funeral as that wuz goin' to be, and wuz dressed in black."

"Wall," sez I (in a quiet, onasumin' way I would gin little hints of my mind on the subject), "I am afraid that will be about all the comforts of life the poor little childern will ever have," sez I. "It will be if you buy many more flower-pieces and crape dresses."

Cephas said "it wouldn't take much crape for the childern's dresses, they wuz so little, only the baby's; that would have to be long."

Sez I, "the baby would look better in white, and it will take sights of crape for a long baby dress."

"Yes, but S. Annie can use it afterwards for veils. She is very economical—takes it from me. And she feels as I do, that the baby must wear it in respect to her father's memory."

Sez I, "The baby don't know crape from a clothes-pin."

"No," sez Cephas, "but in after years the thought of the respect she showed will sustain her."

"Wall," sez I, "I guess she won't have much besides thoughts to live on, if things go on in this way."

I would give little hints in this way, but they wuzn't took. Things went right on as if I hadn't spoke. And I couldn't contend, for truly, as a bad little boy said once on a similar occasion, "it wuzn't my funeral," so I had to set and work on that insane bedquilt and see it go on. But I sithed constant and frequent, and when I wuz all alone in the room I indulged in a few low groans.

CHAPTER X.

TWO dressmakers wuz in the house, to stay all the time till the dresses wuz done; and clerks would come around anon, if not oftener, with packages of mournin' goods and mournin' jewelry and mournin' handkerchiefs and mournin' stockings and mournin' stockin'-supporters and mournin' safety-pins, and etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

Every one of 'em, I knew, a-wrenchin' boards offen the sides of that house that Wellington had worked so hard to get for his wife and little ones.

Wall, the day of the funeral come. It wuz a wet, drizzly day, but Cephas wuz up early to see that everything wuz as he wanted it to be.

As fur as I wuz concerned, I had done my duty, for the crazy bedquilt wuz done; and though brains might totter as they looked at it, I felt that it wuzn't my fault. Sally Ann spread it out with complacency over the lounge, and thanked me, with tears in her eyes, for my noble deed.

Along quite early in the mornin' before the show commenced I went in to see Wellington.

He lay there calm and peaceful, with a look on his face as if he had got away at last from a atmosphere of show and sham, and had got into the great reality of life.

It wuz a good face, and the worryment and care that folks told me had been on it for years had all faded away. But the look of determination and resolve and bravery—that wuz plowed too deep in his face to be smoothed out, even by the

mighty hand that had lain on it. The resolved look, the brave look with which he had met the warfare of life, toiled for victory over want, toiled to place his dear and helpless ones in a position of safety—that look wuz on his face yet, as if the deathless hope and endeavor had gone on into eternity with him.

And by the side of him, on a table, wuz the big high flower-pieces, beginnin' already to wilt and decay.

Wall, its bein' such an oncommon bad day, there wuzn't many to the funeral. But we rode to the meetin'-house in Loontown in a state and splendor that I never expect to ag'in. Cephas had hired eleven mournin' coaches, and the day bein' so bad, and so few a-turnin' out to the funeral, that in order to occupy all the coaches—and Cephas thought it would look better and more popular to have 'em all occupied—we divided up, and Josiah went in one, alone, and lonesome as a dog, as he said afterwards to me. And I sot up straight and oncomfortable in another one on 'em, stark alone.

Cephas had one to himself, and his wife another one, and two old maids, sisters of Cephases who always made a point of attendin' funerals, they each one of 'em had one. S. Annie and her childern, of course, had the first one, and then the minister had one, and one of the trustees in the neighborhood had another; so we lengthened out into quite a crowd, all a-follerin' the shiny hearse, and the casket all covered with showy plated nails. I thought of it in jest that way, for Wellington, I knew, the real Wellington, wuzn't there. No, he wuz fur away—as fur as the Real is from the Unreal.

Wall, we filed into the Loontown meetin'-house in pretty good shape. The same meetin'-house I had been sent to reconoiter. But Cephas hadn't no black handkerchief, and he looked worried about it. He had shed tears a-tellin' me about it, what a oversight it wuz, while I wuz a-fixin' on his mournin' weed. He took it into his head to have a deeper weed at the

last minute, so I fixed it on. He had the weed come up to the top of his hat and lap over. I never see so tall a weed. But it suited Cephas; he said "he thought it showed deep respect."

"Wall," sez I, "it is a deep weed, anyway—the deepest I ever see." And he said as I wuz a-sewin' it on, he a-holdin' his hat for me, "that Wellington deserved it; he deserved it all."

But, as I say, he shed tears to think that his handkerchief wuzn't black-bordered. He said "it wuz a fearful oversight; it would probably make talk."

"But," I sez, "mebby it won't be noticed."

"Yes, it will," sez he. "It will be noticed." And sez he, "I don't care about myself, but I am afraid it will reflect onto Wellington. I am afraid they will think it shows a lack of respect for him. For Wellington's sake I feel cut down about it."

And I sez, "I guess where Wellington is now, the color of a handkerchief border hain't a-goin' to make much difference to him either way."

And I don't spoze it wuz noticed much, for there wuzn't more'n ten or a dozen folks there when we went in. We went in in Injun file mostly by Cephases request, so's to make more show. And as a procession we wuz middlin' long, but ruther thin.

The sermon wuz not so very good as to quality, but abundant as to quantity. It wuz, as nigh as I could calkerlate, about a hour and three quarters long. Josiah whispered to me along about the last that "we had been there over seven hours, and his legs wuz paralyzed."

And I whispered back that "seven hours would take us into the night, and to stretch his feet out and pinch 'em," which he did.

But it wuz long and tegus. My feet got to sleep twice, and I had hard work to wake 'em up ag'in. The sermon meant to be about Wellington, I spoze; he did talk a sight about him,

SO WE DISEMBARKED IN THE DRIPPIN' RAIN.

and then he kinder branched off onto politics, and then the interstate bill; he kinder favored it, I thought.

Wall, we all got drippin' wet a-goin' home, for Cephas insisted on our gettin' out at the grave, for he had hired some oncommon high singers (high every way, in price and in notes) to sing at the grave.

So we disembarked in the drippin' rain on the wet grass, and formed a procession ag'in. And Cephas had a long exercise right there in the rain. But the singin' wuz kinder jerky and curius, and they had got their pay beforehand, so they hurried it through. And one man, the tenor, who wuz dretful afraid of takin' cold, hurried through his part and got through first, and started on a run for the carriage. The others stood their grounds till the piece wuz finished, but they put on some dretful curius quavers. It sounded like they had had chills.

Take it altogether, I don't believe anybody got much satisfaction out of it, only Cephas. S. Annie sp'ilt her dress and bonnet entirely—they wuz wilted all down; and she ordered another suit jest like it before she slept.

Wall, the next mornin' early two men come with plans for monuments. Cephas had telegrafted to 'em to come with plans and bid for the job of furnishin' the monument.

And after a good deal of talk on both sides, Cephas and S. Annie selected one that wuz very high and p'inted.

The men stayed to dinner, and I said to Cephas out to one side:

"Cephas, that monument is a-goin' to cost a sight."

"Wall," sez he, "we can't raise too high a one. Wellington deserved it all."

Sez I, "Won't that and all these funeral expenses take about all the money he left?"

"Oh, no!" sez he. "He had insured his life for a large amount, and it all goes to his wife and children. He deserves a monument if a man ever did."

"But," sez I, "don't you believe that Wellington would ruther have S. Annie and the childern settled down in a good little home with sumthin' left to take care of 'em than to have all his money spent in perfectly useless things?"

"Useless!" sez Cephas, turnin' red. "Why," sez he, "if you wuzn't a near relation I should resent that speech bitterly."

"Wall," sez I, "what do all these flowers and empty carriages and silver-plated nails and crape, and so forth—what does it all amount to?"

"Respect and honor to his memory," sez Cephas, proudly.

Sez I, "Such a life as Wellington's had them; nobody could take 'em away nor deminish 'em. Such a brave, honest life is crowned with honor and respect, anyway. It don't need no crape, nor flowers, nor monuments to win 'em. And, at the same time," sez I, dreamily, "if a man is mean, no amount of crape or flower-pieces or flowery sermons or obituries is a-goin' to cover up that meanness. A life has to be lived outdoors, as it were; it can't be hid. A string of mournin' carriages, no matter how long, hain't a-goin' to carry a dishonorable life into honor; and no grave, no matter how low and humble it is, is a-goin' to cover up a honorable life.

"Such a life as Wellington's don't need no monument to carry up the story of his virtues into the heavens; it is known there already. And them that mourn his loss don't need cold marble words to recall his goodness and faithfulness. The heart where the shadow of his eternal absence has fell don't need crape to make it darker.

"Wellington wouldn't be forgot if S. Annie wore pure white from day to day. No, nobody that knew Wellington, from all I have hearn of him, needs crape to remind 'em that he wuz once here and now is gone.

"Howsumever, as fur as that is concerned, I always feel that mourners must do as they are a-mind to about crape, with fear and tremblin'; that is, if they are well off, and can do as they

are a-mind to; and the same with monuments, flowers, empty coaches, etc. But in this case, Cephas Bodley, I wouldn't be a-doin' my duty if I didn't speak my mind. When I look at these little helpless souls that are left in a cold world with nothin' to stand between 'em and want but the small means their pa worked so hard for and left for the express purpose of takin' care of 'em, it seems to me a foolish thing, and a cruel thing, to spend all that money on what is entirely onnecessary."

"Onnecessary!" sez Cephas, angrily. "Ag'in I say, Josiah Allen's wife, that if it wuzn't for our close relationship I should turn on you. A worm will turn," sez he, "if it is too hardly trampled on."

"I hain't trampled on you," sez I, "nor hain't had no idee on't. I wuz only statin' solemn facts and the truth of the matter. And you will see it some time, Cephas Bodley, if you don't now."

Sez Cephas, "The worm has turned, Josiah Allen's wife! Yes, I feel that I have got to look now to more distant relations for comfort. Yes, the worm has been stomped on too heavy."

He looked cold, cold as a iceickle almost. And I see that jest the few words I had spoke, jest the slight hints I had gin, hadn't been took as they should have been took. So I said no more. For ag'in the remark of that little bad boy came up in my mind and restrained me from sayin' any more.

Truly, as the young male child observed, "it wuzn't my funeral."

We went home almost immegiately afterwards, my heart nearly a-bleedin' for the little childern, poor little creeters, and Cephas actin' cold and distant to the last.

And we hain't seen 'em sence. But news has come from 'em, and come straight. Josiah heerd to Jonesville all about it. And though it is hitchin' the democrat buggy on front

"YES, THE WORM HAS BEEN STOMPED ON TOO HEAVY."

of the mare—to tell the end of the funeral here—yet I may as well tell it now and be done with it.

The miller at Loontown wuz down to the Jonesville mill to get the loan of some bags, and Josiah happened to be there to mill that day, and heerd all about it.

Cephas had got the monument, and the ornaments on it cost fur more than he expected. There wuz a wreath a-runnin' round it clear from the bottom to the top, and verses a kinder runnin' up it at the same time. And it cost fearful. Poetry a-runnin' up, they say, costs more than it duz on a level.

Anyway, the two thousand dollars that wuz insured on Wellington's life wuzn't quite enough to pay for it. But the sale of his law library and the best of the housen' stuff paid it. The nine hundred he left went, every mite of it, to pay the funeral expenses and mournin' for the family.

And as bad luck always follers on in a procession, them mortgages of Cephases all run out sort o' together. His creditors sold him out, and when his property wuz disposed of it left him over fourteen hundred dollars in debt.

The creditors acted perfectly greedy, so they say—took everything they could; and one of the meanest ones took that insane bedquilt that I finished. That wuz mean. They say Sally Ann crumpled right down when that wuz took. Some say that they got hold of that tall weed of Cephases, and some dispute it; some say that he wore it on the last ride he took in Loontown.

But, howsumever, Cephas wuz took sick, Sally Ann wuzn't able to do anything for their support, S. Annie wuz took down with the typhus, and so it happened the very day the monument wuz brought to the Loontown cemetery Cephas Bodley's folks wuz carried to the county-house, S. Annie, the childern and all.

And it happened dretful curius, but the town hired that very

team that drawed the monument there to take the family back. It wuz a good team.

The monument wuzn't set up, for they lacked money to pay for the underpinnin'! (Wuzn't it curius Cephas Bodley never would think of the underpinnin' to anything?) But it lay there by the side of the road, a great white shape.

And they say the childern wuz skairt, and cried when they went by it—cried and wept.

But I believe it wuz because they wuz cold and hungry that made 'em cry. I don't believe it wuz the monument.

CARRIED TO THE COUNTY-HOUSE.

CHAPTER XI.

FEW days follerin' on and ensuin' after this eppisode Submit Tewksbury wuz a-takin' supper with me. She had come home with me from the meetin'-house where we had been to work all day.

I had urged her to stay, for she lived a mile further on the road, and had got to walk home afoot.

And she hain't any too well off, Submit hain't—she has to work hard for every mite of food she eats and clothes she wears and fuel and lights, etc., etc.

So I keep her to dinners and suppers all I can, specially when we are engaged in meetin'-house work, for as poor as Submit is, she will insist on doin' for the meetin'-house jest as much as any other female woman in Jonesville.

She is quite small-boneded, and middlin' good-lookin' for a woman of her years. She has got big dark eyes, very soft and mellow lookin' in expression—and a look deep down into 'em, as if she had been waitin' for somethin' for some time. Her hair is gettin' quite gray now, but its original color wuz orburn, and she has got quite a lot of it—kinder crinkly round her forward. Her complexion is pale.

She is a very good-lookin' woman yet, might marry any day of the week now, I hain't no doubt of it. She is a single woman, but is well thought on in Jonesville and the southern part of Zoar, where she has relatives on her mother's side.

She has had chances, to my certain knowledge (widowers and such).

But if all the men in the world should come and stand in rows in front of her gate with gilded crowns in their hands all ready to crown her, and septers all ready for her to grasp holt of, and wield over the world, she would refuse every one of 'em.

She has had a disappointment, Submit has. And she looked at the world so long through tears that the world got to lookin' sort o' dimlike and shadowy to her, and the whole men race looked to her fur off and misty, as folks will when you look at 'em through a rain.

She couldn't marry one of them shadows of men if she tried, and she hain't never tried. No, her heart always has been, and is now, fur away, a-travelin' through unknown regions, unknown, and yet more real to her than Jonesville or Zoar, a-follerin' the one man in the world who is a reality to her.

Submit wuz engaged to a young Methodist minister by the name of Samuel Danker. I remember him well. A good-lookin' young feller at the time, with blue eyes and light hair, ruther long and curly, and kinder wavin' back from his forward, and a deep spiritual look in his eyes. In fact, his eyes looked right through the fashions and follies of the civilized world, into the depths of ignorance, rivers of ruin and despair, that wuz a-washin' over a human race, black jungles where naked sin and natural depravities crouched hungry for victims.

Samuel Danker felt that he had got to go into heathen lands as a missionary. He wuz engaged to Submit, and loved her dearly, and he urged her to go, too.

But Submit had a invalid father on her hands, a bed-rid grandfather, and three young brothers too young to earn a thing, and they all on 'em together hadn't a cent of money to their names. They had twenty-five acres of middlin' poor land, and a old house.

Wall, Submit felt that she couldn't leave these helpless ones and go to more foreign heathen lands. So, with a achin' heart, she let Samuel Danker go from her, for he felt a call, loud,

and she couldn't counsel him to shet up his ears, or put cotton into 'em. Submit Tewksbury had always loved and worked for the Methodist meetin'-house (she j'ined it on probation when she wuz thirteen). But although she always had been extremely liberal in givin', and had made a practice of contributin' every cent she could spare to the meetin'-house, it wuz spozed that Samuel Danker wuz the biggest offerin' she had ever give to it.

Fur it wuz known that he went to her the night before he sot sail, took supper with her, and told her she should decide the matter for him, whether he went or whether he staid.

It wuz spozed his love for Submit wuz so great that it made him waver when the time come that he must leave her to her lot of toil and sacrifice and loneliness.

But Submit loved the Methodist meetin'-house to that extent, she leaned so hard on the arm of Duty, that she nerved up her courage anew, refused to accept the sacrifice of his renunciation, bid him go to his great work, and quit himself like a man—told him she would always love him, pray for him, be constant to him. And she felt that the Master they both wanted to serve would some day bring him back to her.

So he sailed away to his heathens, and Submit stayed to home with her five helpless males and her achin' heart. And I couldn't tell which made her the most trouble, to save my life.

She knew the secret of her achin' heart, and the long dark nights she kep' awake with it. The neighbors couldn't understand that exactly, for there hain't no language been discovered yet that will give voice to the silent crys of a breakin' heart, a tender heart, a constant heart, cryin' out acrost the grayness of dreary days, acrost the blackness of lonely nights.

But we could see her troubles with the peevish paralasys of age, with the tremendous follys of undisciplined youth.

But Submit took care of the hull caboodle of 'em; worked out some by days' work to get more necessaries for 'em than

the poor little farm would bring in; nursed the sick on their sick-beds and on their death-beds till she see 'em into heaven—or that is where we spoze they went to, bein' deservin' old males both on 'em, her father and her grandfather, and in full connection with the Methodist Episcopal meetin'-house.

She took care of her young brothers, patient with 'em always, ready to mend bad rents in their clothin' and their behavior—tryin' to prop up their habits and their morals, givin' 'em all the schoolin' she could, givin' 'em all a good trade, all but the youngest, him she kep' with her always till the Lord took him (scarlet fever), took him to learn the mysterius trade of the immortals.

Submit had a hard fit of sickness after that. And when she got up ag'in there wuz round her pale forward a good many white hairs that wuz orburn before the little boy went away.

Sence that the other boys have married, and Submit has lived alone in the old farm-house, lettin' the farm out on shares. It is all run down; she don't get much from it; it don't yield much but trouble and burdocks, but as little as she gets, she always will, as I say, do her full share, and more than her share, for the meetin'-house.

Some think it is on account of her inherient goodness, and some think it is on account of Samuel Danker.

We all spoze she hain't forgot Samuel. And they do say that every year when the day comes round that he took supper with her for the last time, she puts a plate on for him—the very one he eat on last—a pink-edged chiny plate, with gilt sprigs, the last one left of her mother's first set of chiny.

That is what they say; I hain't never seen the plate.

It is now about twenty years sence Samuel Danker went to heathen lands. And as it wuz a man-eatin' tribe he went to preach to, and as he hain't been heern of from that day to this, it is spozed that they eat him up some years ago.

But it is thought that Submit hain't gin up hope yet. We

IT IS SPOZED THAT THEY EAT HIM UP SOME YEARS AGO.

spoze so, but don't know, on account of her never sayin' anythin' on the subject. But we judge from the plate.

Wall, as I say (and I have eppisoded fearfully, fearfully), Submit took supper with me that night. And after Josiah had put out his horse (he had been to Jonesville for the evenin' mail, and stopped for us at the meetin'-house on his way back), he took the "World" out of his pocket, and perused it for some time, and from that learned the great news that wimmen wuz jest about to be held up ag'in, to see if her strength wuz sufficient to set on the Conference.

And oh! how Josiah Allen went on about it to Submit and me while we wuz a-eatin' supper—and for a hour afterwuds.

HE TOOK SUPPER WITH HER FOR THE LAST TIME.

CHAPTER XII.

UBMIT wuz very skairt to heern him go on (she felt more nervous on account of an extra hard day's work), and I myself wuz all beat out, but I wuzn't afraid at all of him, though he did go on elegant, and dretful empressive and even skairful.

He stood up on the same old ground that men have always stood up on, the ground of man's great strength and capability, and wimmen's utter weakness, helplessness and incapacity. Josiah enlarged almost wildly on the subject of how high, how inaccessibly lofty, the Conference wuz, and the utter impossibility of a weak, helpless,fragilebein' like a woman ever gettin' up on it, much less settin' on it.

And then, oh, how vividly he depictered it! how he and every other male Methodist in the land loved wimmen too well, worshiped 'em too deeply, to put such a wearin' job onto 'em. Oh, how Josiah Allen soared up in eloquence! Submit shed tears, or, that is, I thought she did—I see her wipe her eyes, anyway. Some think that about the time the Samuel Danker anniversary comes round she is more nervous and deprested. It wuz very near now, and take that with her hard work that day, it accounts some for her extra depression—though, without any doubt, it wuz Josiah's talk that started the tears.

I couldn't bear to see Submit look so mournful and deprested, and so, though I wuz that tired myself that I could hardly hold my head up, yet I did take my bits in my teeth, as you may say, and asked him:

"What the awful hard job wuz that he and other men wuz so anxus to ward offen wimmen."

And he sez, "Why, a-settin' on the Conference."

And I sez, "I don't believe that is such a awful hard job to tackle."

"Yes, indeed, it is," sez Josiah in his most skairful axent, "yes, it is."

And he shook his head meenin'ly and impressively, and looked at me and Submit in as mysterius and strange a way es I have ever been looked at in my life, and I have had dretful curius looks cast onto me, from first to last. And he sez in 'em deep, empressive axents of hisen:

"You jest try it once, and see—I have sot on it, and I know."

Josiah wuz sent once as a delegate to the Methodist Conference, so I spozed he did know.

But I sez, "Why, you come home the second day when you sot as happy as a king, and you told me how you had rested off durin' the two days, and how you had visited round at Uncle Jenkin'ses, and Cousin Henn's, and you said that you never had had such a good time in your hull life as you did when you wuz a-settin'. You looked as happy as a king, and acted so."

Josiah looked dumbfounded for most a quarter of a minute. For he knew my words wuz as true as anythin' ever sot down in Matthew, Mark or Luke, or any of the other old patriarks. He knew it wuz Gospel truth, that he had boasted of his good times a-settin', and, as I say, for nearly a quarter of a minute he showed plain signs of mortification.

But almost immegiately he recovered himself, and went on with the doggy obstinacy of his sect:

"Oh, wall! Men can tackle hard jobs and get some enjoyment out of it, too, when it is in the line of duty. One thing that boys 'em up and makes 'em happy is the thought that they are a-keepin' trouble and care offen wimmen. That is a sweet thought to men, and always wuz. And there wuz great

A-SETTIN' ON THE CONFERENCE.

strains put onto our minds, us men that sot, that wimmen couldn't be expected to grapple with, and hadn't ort to try to. It wuz a great strain onto us."

"What wuz the nater of the strain?" sez I. "I didn't know as you did a thing only sot still there and go to sleep. You wuz

fast asleep there most the hull of the time, for it come straight to me from them that know. And all that Deacon Bobbet did who went with you wuz to hold up his hand two or three times a-votin'. I shouldn't think that wuz so awful wearin'."

And ag'in I sez, "What wuz the strain?"

But Josiah didn't answer, for that very minute he remembered a pressin' engagement he had about borrowin' a plow. He said he had got to go up to Joe Charnick's to get his plow. (I don't believe he wanted a plow that time of night.)

But he hurried away from the spot. And soon after Submit went home lookin' more deprested and down-casted than ever.

And Josiah Allen didn't get home till late at night. I dare persume to say it wuz as late as a quarter to nine.

And I sot there all alone, and a-meditatin' on things, and a-wonderin' what under the sun he wuz a-traipsin' up to Joe Charnick's for at that time of night, and a-worryin' some for fear he wuz a-keepin' Miss Charnick up, and a-spozin' in my mind what Miss Charnick would do to get along with the meetin'-house and the Conference question if she wuz a member. (She is a very sensible woman, Jenette Charnick is, very, and a great favorite with me and others.)

And I got to thinkin' how prosperus and happy she is now, and how much she had went through. And I declare the hull thing come back to me, all the strange and curius circumstances connected with her courtship and marriage, and I thought it all out ag'in, the hull story, from beginnin' to end.

The way it begun wuz—and the way Josiah Allen and me come to have any connection with the story wuz as follers:

Some time ago a widder come to stay with us a spell, she that wuz Tamer Shelmadine, Miss Trueman Pool that now is.

Her husband died several years ago, and left her not over and above well off. And so she goes round a-visitin', and has went ever sence his death. And finds sights of faults with things wherever she is, sights of it.

Trueman wuz Josiah's cousin on his own side, and I always made a practice of usin' her quite well. She used to live neighbor to me before I wuz married, and she come and stayed nine weeks. She is a tall, spindlin' woman, a Second Adventist by perswasion, and weighs about ninety-nine pounds.

Wall, as I say, she means middlin' well, and would be quite agreeable if it wuzn't for a habit she has of thinkin' what she duz is a leetle better than anybody else can do, and wantin' to tell a leetle better story than anybody else can.

Now, she thinks she looks better than I do. But Josiah sez she can't begin with me for looks, and I don't spoze she can, though, of course, it hain't to be expected that I would want it told of that I said so. No, I wouldn't want it told of pro or con, especially con. But I know Josiah Allen has always been called a pretty good judge of wimmen's looks.

And now she thinks she can set hens better than I can—and make better riz biscuit. She jest the same as told me so. Anyway, the first time I baked bread after she got here she looked down on my loaves real haughty, yet pityin'ly, and sez:

"It is very good for yeast, but I always use milk emptin's."

And she kinder tosted her head, and sort o' swept out of the room, not with a broom, no, she would scorn to sweep out a room with a broom or help me in any way, but she sort o' swept it out with her mean. But I didn't care, I knew my bread wuz good.

Now, if anybody is sick, she will always tell of times when she has been sicker. She boasts of layin' three nights and two days in a fit. But we don't believe it, Josiah and me don't. That is, we don't believe she lay there so long a-runnin'.

We believe she come out of 'em occasionally.

But you can't get her to give off a hour or a minute of the time. Three nights and two days she lay there a-runnin', so she sez, and she has said it so long that we spoze, Josiah and me do, that she believes it herself now.

CHAPTER XIII.

URIUS, hain't it? How folks will get to tellin' things, and finally tell 'em so much that finally they will get to believin' of 'em themselves—boastin' of bein' rich, etc., or bad. Now, I have seen folks boast over that, act real haughty because they had been bad and got over it. I've seen temperance lecturers and religious exhorters boast sights and sights over how bad they had been. But they wuzn't tellin' the truth, though they had told the same thing so much that probable they had got to thinkin' so.

But in the case of one man in petickuler I found out for myself, for I didn't believe what he wuz a-sayin' any of the time. Why, he made out in evenin' meetin's, protracted and otherwise, that he had been a awful villain. Why, no pirate wuz ever wickeder than he made himself to be, in the old times before he turned round and became pious.

But I didn't believe it, for he had a good look to his face, all but the high-headed look he had, and sort o' vain.

But except this one look his face wuz a good moral face, and I knew that no man could cut up and act as he claimed that he had without carryin' some marks on the face of the cuttin' up, and also of the actin'.

And so, as it happened, I went a-visitin' (to Josiah's relations) to the very place where he had claimed to do his deeds of wild badness, and I found that he had always been a pattern man—never had done a single mean act, so fur as wuz known.

WHY, NO PIRATE EVER WUZ WICKEDER.

Where wuz his boastin' then? As the Bible sez, why, it wuz all vain talk. He had done it to get up a reputation. He had done it because he wuz big feelin' and vain. And he had got so haughty over it, and had told of it so much, that I spoze he believed in it himself.

Curius! hain't it? But I am a-eppisodin', and to resoom. Trueman's wife would talk jest so, jest so haughty and high-headed, about the world comin' to a end.

She'd dispute with everybody right up and down if they disagreed with her—and specially about that religion of hern. How sot she wuz, how extremely sot.

But then it hain't in me, nor never wuz, to fight anybody for any petickuler religion of theirn.

There is sights and sights of different religions round amongst different friends of mine, and most all on 'em quite good ones. That is, they are agreeable to the ones who believe in 'em, and not over and above disagreable to me.

Now, it seems to me that in most all of these different doctrines and beliefs there is a grain of truth, and if folks would only kinder hold onto that grain, and hold themselves stiddy while they held onto it, they would be better off.

But most folks when they go to follerin' off a doctrine, they foller too fur, they hain't megum enough.

Now, for instance, when you go to work and whip anybody, or hang 'em or burn 'em up for not believin' as you do, that is goin' too fur.

It has been done, though, time and ag'in, in the world's history, and mebby will be ag'in.

But it hain't reasonable. Now, what good will doctrines o' any kind do to anybody after they are burnt up or choked to death?

You see, such things hain't bein' megum. Because I can't believe jest as somebody else duz, it hain't for me to pitch at 'em and burn 'em up, or even whip 'em.

No, indeed! And most probable if I should study faithfully out their beliefs, I would find one grain, or mebby a grain and a half, of real truth in it.

Now, for instance, take the doctrines of Christian Healin', or Mind Cure.

Now, I can't exactly believe that if I fell down and hurt my head on a stun—I cannot believe as I am a-layin' there that I hain't fell, and there hain't no stun—and while I am a-groanin' and a-bathin' the achin' bruise in anarky and wormwood, I can't believe that there hain't no such thing as pain, nor never wuz. No, I can't believe this with the present light I have got on the subject.

But yet I have seen them that this mind-cure religion had fairly riz right up, and made 'em nigher to heaven every way—so nigh to it that seemin'ly a light out of some of its winders had lit up their faces with its glowin' repose, its sweet rapture.

I've seen 'em, seen 'em as the patent-medicine maker observes so frequently, "before and after takin'."

Folks that wuz despondent and hopeless, and wretched actin', why this belief made 'em jest blossom right out into a state of hopefulness and calmness and joy—refreshin' indeed to contemplate.

Wall, now, the idee of whippin' anybody for believin' anythin' that brings such a good change to 'em, and fills 'em and 'em round 'em with so much peace and happiness!

Why, I wouldn't do it for a dollar bill. And as for hangin' 'em and br'ilin' 'em on gridirons, etc., why, that is entirely out of the question, or ort to be.

And now, it don't seem to me that I ever could make a tree walk off by lookin' at it and commandin' it to—or call some posys to fall down into my lap, right through the plasterin'—or send myself, or one of myselfs, off to Injy, while the other one of me stayed to Jonesville.

Now, honestly speakin', it don't seem that I ever could learn

to do this, not at my age, anyway, and most dead with rheumatiz a good deal of the time. I most know I couldn't.

But then ag'in I have seen believers in Theosiphy that could do wonders, and seemed indeed to have got marvelous control over the forces of Natur'. And now the idee of my whippin' 'em for it! Why, you wouldn't ketch me at it.

And Spiritualism now! I spoze, and I about know, that there are lots of folks that won't ever see into any other world than this till the breath leaves their body.

Yet I've seen 'em, pure sweet souls, too, as I ever see, whose eyes beheld blessed visions withheld from more material gaze. Yes, I've neighbored with about all sorts of religius believers, and never disputed that they had a right to their own religion.

And I've seen 'em that didn't make a practice of goin' to any meetin'-houses much, who lived so near to God and his angels that they felt the touch of angel hands on their forwards every day of their lives, and you could see the glow of the Fairer Land in their rapt eyes. They had outgrown the outward forms of religion that had helped 'em at first, jest as childern outgrow the primers and A B C books of their childhood and advance into the higher learnin'.

I've seen 'em folks; I've neighbored with 'em. Human faults they had, or God would have taken 'em to his own land before now. Their imperfections, I spoze, sort o' anchored 'em here for a spell to a imperfect world.

But you could see, if you got nigh enough to their souls to see anythin' about 'em—you could see that the anchor-chains wuz slight, after all, and when they wuz broke, oh, how lightly and easily they would sail away, away to the land that their rapt souls inhabited even now!

Yes, I've seen all sorts of religius believers, and I wuzn't goin' to be too hard on Tamer for her belief, though I couldn't believe as she did.

CHAPTER XIV.

HE come to our house a-visitin' along the first week in June, and the last day in June wuz the day they had sot for the world to come to an end. I myself didn't believe she knew positive about it, and Josiah didn't, either. And I sez to her, "The Bible sez that it hain't a-goin' to be revealed to angels even, or to the Son himself, but only to the Father, when that great day shall be." And sez I to Trueman's wife, sez I, "How shall you be expected to know it?"

Sez she, with that same collected together haughty look to her, "My name wuzn't mentioned, I believe, amongst them that wuzn't to know it!"

And, of course, I had to own up that it wuzn't. But good land! I didn't believe she knew a thing more about it than I did, but I didn't dispute with her much, because she wuz one of the relatives on his side—you know you have to do different with 'em than you do with 'em on your own side—you have to. And then ag'in I felt that if it didn't come to an end she would be convinced that she wuz in the wrong on't, and if she did we should both of us be pretty apt to know it, so there wuzn't much use in disputin' back and forth.

But she wuz firm as iron in her belief. And she had come up visitin' to our home, so's to be nigh when Trueman riz. Trueman wuz buried in the old Risley deestrict, not half a mile from us on a back road. And she naterally wanted to be round at the time.

She said plain to me that Trueman never could seem to get

along without her. And though she didn't say it right out, she carried the idee (and Josiah resented it, because Trueman wuz a favorite cousin of his'n on his own side). She jest the same as said right out that Trueman, if she wuzn't by him to 'tend to him, would be jest as apt to come up wrong end up as anyway.

Josiah didn't like it at all.

Wall, she had lived a widowed life for a number of years, and had said right out, time and time ag'in, that she wouldn't marry ag'in. But Josiah thought, and I kinder mistrusted myself, that she wuz kinder on the lookout, and would marry ag'in if she got a chance—not fierce, you know, or anythin' of that kind, but kinder quietly lookin' out and standin' ready. That wuz when she first come; but before she went away she acted fierce.

Wall, there wuz sights of Adventists up in the Risley deestrict, and amongst the rest wuz old bachelder Joe Charnick.

And Joe Charnick wuz, I spoze, of all Advents, the most Adventy. He jest knew the world wuz a-comin' to a end that very day, the last day of June, at four o'clock in the afternoon. And he got his robe all made to go up in. It wuz made of a white book-muslin, and Jenette Finster made it. Cut it out by one of his mother's nightgowns—so she told me in confidence, and, of course, I tell jest the same; I want it kep'.

She was afraid Joe wouldn't like it, if he knew she took the nightgown for a guide, wantin' it, as he did, for a religius purpose.

But, good land! as I told her, religion or not, anybody couldn't cut anything to look anyhow without sumpthin' for a guide, and she bein' an old maiden felt a little delicate about measurin' him.

His mother wuz as big round as he wuz, her weight bein' 230 by the steel-yards, and she allowed two fingers and a half extra length—Joe is tall. She gathered it in full round the

neck, and the sleeves (at his request) hung down like wings—a breadth for each wing wuz what she allowed.

Jenette owned up to me (though she wouldn't want it told of for the world, for it had been spozed for years, that he and she had a-likin' for each other, and mebby would make a match some time, though what they had been a-waitin for for the last ten years nobody knew). But she allowed to me that when he got his robe on he wuz the worst-lookin' human bein' that she ever laid eyes on, and sez she, for she likes a joke, Jenette duz, "I should think if Joe looked in the glass after he got it on, his religion would be a comfort to him; I should think he would be glad the world wuz comin' to a end."

But he didn't look at the glass, Jenette said he didn't; he wanted to see if it wuz the right size round the neck. Joe hain't handsome, but he is kinder good-lookin', and he is a good feller and got plenty to do with, but bein' kinder big-featured and tall and hefty, he must have looked like fury in the robe. But he is liked by everybody, and everybody is glad to see him so prosperous and well off.

He has got three hundred acres of good land, "be it more or less," as the deed reads; thirty head of cows and seven head of horses (and the hull bodies of 'em). And a big sugar-bush, over one thousand one hundred trees, and a nice little sugar-house way up on a pretty side hill amongst the maple-trees. A good, big, handsome dwellin'-house, a sort of cream color, with green blinds; big barn, and carriage-house, etc., etc., and everything in the very best of order. He is a pattern farmer and a pattern son—yes, Joe couldn't be a more pattern son if he acted every day from a pattern.

He treats his mother dretful pretty, from day to day. She thinks that there hain't nobody like Joe; and it wuz spozed that Jenette thought so, too.

But Jenette is, and always wuz, runnin' over with common sense, and she always made fun and laughed at Joe when he

TRYING ON HIS ASCENSION ROBE.

got to talkin' about his religion, and about settin' a time for the world to come to a end. And some thought that that wuz one reason why the match didn't go off, for Joe likes her, everybody could see that, for he wuz jest such a great, honest, open-hearted feller that he never made any secret of it. And Jenette liked Joe, I knew, though she fooled a good many on the subject. But she wuz always a great case to confide in me, and though she didn't say so right out, which wouldn't have been her way, for, as the poet sez, she wuzn't one "to wear her heart on the sleeves of her bask waist," still, I knew as well as I wanted to that she thought her eyes of him. And old Miss Charnick jest about worshiped Jenette, would have her with her, sewin' for her, and takin' care of her—she wuz sick a good deal, Mother Charnick wuz. And she would have been tickled most to death to have had Joe marry her and bring her right home there.

And Jenette wuz a smart little creeter, "smart as lightnin'," as Josiah always said.

She had got along in years, Jenette had, without marryin', for she staid to hum and took care of her old father and mother and Tom. The other girls married off, and left her to hum, and she had chances, so it wuz said, good ones, but she wouldn't leave her father and mother, who wuz gettin' old and kinder bed-rid, and needed her. Her father, specially, said he couldn't live, and wouldn't try to, if Jenette left 'em, but he said, the old gentleman did, that Jenette should be richly paid for her goodness to 'em.

That wuzn't what made Jenette good, no, indeed; she did it out of the pure tenderness and sweetness of her nater and lovin' heart. But I used to love to hear the old gentleman talk that way, for he wuz well off, and I felt that so fur as money could pay for the hull devotion of a life, why, Jenette would be looked out for, and have a good home, and enough to do with. So she staid to hum, as I say, and took care of

'em night and day; sights of watchin' and wearisome care she had, poor little creeter; but she took the best of care of 'em, and kep' 'em kinder comforted up, and clean, and brought up Tom, the youngest boy, by hand, and thought her eyes on him.

And he wuz a smart chap—awful smart, as it proved in the end; for he married when he wuz twenty-one, and brought his wife (a disagreeable creeter) home to the old homestead, and Jenette, before they had been there two weeks, wuz made to feel that her room wuz better than her company.

That wuz the year the old gentleman died; her mother had died three months prior and beforehand.

Her brother, as I said, wuz smart, and he and his wife got round the old man in some way and sot him against Jenette, and got everything he had.

He wuz childish, the old man wuz; used to try to put his pantaloons on over his head, and get his feet into his coat-sleeves, etc., etc.

And he changed his will, that had gin Jenette half the property, a good property, too, and gin it all to Tom, every mite of it, all but one dollar, which Jenette never took by my advice.

For I wuz burnin' indignant at old Mr. Finster and at Tom. Curius, to think such a girl as Jenette had been—such a patient, good creeter, and such a good-tempered one, and everything—to think her pa should have forgot all she had done and suffered and gin up for 'em, and give the property all to that boy, who had never done anything only to spend their money and make Jenette trouble.

But then I spoze it wuz old Mr. Finster's mind, or the lack on't, and I had to stand it, likewise so did Jenette.

But I never sot a foot into Tom Finster's house, not a foot, after that day that Jenette left it. I wouldn't. But I took her right to my house, and kep' her for nine weeks right along, and wuz glad to.

That wuz some ten years prior and before this, and she had gone round sewin' ever sence. And she wuz beloved by everybody, and had gone round highly respected, and at seventy-five cents a day.

Her troubles, and everybody that knew her knew how many she had of 'em, but she kep' 'em all to herself, and met the world and her neighbors with a bright face.

If she took her skeletons out of her closet to air 'em, and I spoze she did, everybody duz; they have to at times, to see if their bones are in good order, if for nothin' else. But if she ever did take 'em out and dust 'em, she did it all by herself. The closet door wuz shet up and locked when anybody wuz round. And you would think, by her bright, laughin' face, that she never heard the word skeleton, or ever listened to the rattle of a bone.

And she kep' up such a happy, cheerful look on the outside, that I spoze it ended by her bein' cheerful and happy on the inside.

The stiddy, good-natured, happy spirit that she cultivated at first by hard work, so I spoze; but at last it got to be second nater, the qualities kinder struck in, and she wuz happy, and she wuz contented; that is, I spoze so.

Though I, who knew Jenette better than anybody else, almost, knew how tuff, how fearful tuff it must have come on her, to go round from home to home—not bein' settled down at home anywhere. I knew jest what a lovin' little home body she wuz. And how her sweet nater, like the sun, would love to light up one bright lovin' home, and shine kinder stiddy there, instead of glancin' and changin' about from one place to another, like a meteor.

Some would have liked it; some like change and constant goin' about and movin' constantly through space—but I knew Jenette wuzn't made on the meteor plan. I felt sorry for Jenette, down deep in my heart, I did; but I didn't tell her

so; no, she wouldn't have liked it; she kep' a brave face to the world. And, as I said, her comin' wuz looked for weeks and weeks ahead in any home where she wuz engaged to sew by the day.

Everybody in the house used to feel the presence of a sunshiny, cheerful spirit. One that wuz determined to turn her back onto troubles she couldn't help, and keep her face sot towards the Sun of Happiness. One who felt good and pleasant towards everybody, wished everybody well. One who could look upon other folks'ses good fortune without a mite of jealousy or spite. One who loved to hear her friends praised and admired, loved to see 'em happy. And if they had a hundred times the good things she had, why, she was glad for their sakes that they had 'em, she loved to see 'em enjoy 'em, if she couldn't.

And she wuz dretful kinder cunnin' and cute, Jenette wuz. She would make the oddest little speeches; keep everybody laughin' round her, when she got to goin'.

Yes, she wuz liked dretful well, Jenette wuz. Her face has a kind of a pert look onto it, her black eyes snap, a good-natured snap, though, and her nose turns up jest enough to look kinder cunnin', and her hair curls all over her head.

Smart round the house she is, and Mother Charnick likes that, for she is a master good housekeeper. Smart to answer back and joke. Joe is slow of speech, and his big blue eyes won't fairly get sot onto anything before Jenette has looked it all through, and turned it over, and examined it on the other side and got through with it.

Wall, she wuz to work to Mother Charnick's makin' her a black alpacky dress, and four new calico ones, and coverin' a parasol.

A good many said that Miss Charnick got dresses a purpose for Jenette to make, so's to keep her there. Jenette wouldn't stay there a minute only when she wuz to work, and

as they always kep' a good, strong hired girl, she knew when she wuz needed and when she wuzn't. But, of course, she couldn't refuse to sew for her, and at what she wuz sot at, though she must have known and felt that Miss Charnick wuz lavish in dresses. She had forty-two calico dresses, and everybody knew it, new ones, besides woosted. But, anyway, there she wuz a-sewin' when the word came that the world wuz a-comin' to a end on the thirtieth day of June, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Miss Charnick wuz a believer, but not to the extent that Joe wuz. For Jenette asked her if she should stop sewin', not spozin' that she would need the dresses, specially the four calico ones she wuz makin', and the parasol she wuz coverin', in case of the world's endin'.

And she told Jenette, and Jenette told me, so's I know it is true, "that she might go right on, and get the parasol cover, and the trimmin's to the dresses, cambrick and linin' and things, and hooks and eyes."

And Miss Charnick didn't prepare no robe. But Jenette mistrusted, though Miss Charnick is close-mouthed, and didn't say nothin', but Jenette mistrusted that she laid out, when she sees signs, to use a nightgown.

She had piles of the nicest ones, that Jenette had made for her from time to time, over twenty-eight, all trimmed off nice enough for day dresses, so Jenette said, trimmed with tape trimmin's, some of 'em, and belted down in front.

Wall, they had lots of meetin's at the Risley school-house, as the time drew near. And Miss Trueman Pool went to every one on 'em.

She had been too weak to go out to the well or to the barn. She wanted dretfully to see some new stanchils that Josiah had been a-makin', jest like some that Pool had had in his barn. She wanted to see 'em dretful, but wuz too weak to walk. And I had had kind of a tussle in my own mind whether or not I

should offer to let Josiah carry her out; but kinder hesitated, thinkin' mebby she would get stronger.

But I hain't jealous, not a mite. It is known that I hain't all through Jonesville and Loontown. No, I'd scorn it. I thought Pool's wife would get better, and she did.

One evenin' Joe Charnick come down to bring home Josiah's augur, and the conversation turned onto Adventin'. And Miss Pool see that Joe wuz congenial on that subject; he believed jest as she did, that the world would come to an end the thirtieth. This wuz along the first part of the month.

He spoke of the good meetin's they wuz a-havin' to the Risley school-house, and how he always attended to every one on 'em. And the next mornin' Miss Trueman Pool gin out that she wuz a-goin' that evenin'. It wuz a good half a mile away, and I reminded her that Josiah had to be away with the team, for he wuz a-goin' to Loontown, heavy loaded, and wouldn't get back till along in the evenin'.

But she said, "that she felt that the walk would do her good."

I then reminded her of the stanchils, but she said "stanchils and religion wuz two separate things." Which I couldn't deny, and didn't try to. And she sot off for the school-house that evenin' a-walkin' afoot. And the rest of her adventin's and the adventin's of Joe I will relate in another epistol; and I will also tell whether the world come to an end or not. I know folks will want to know, and I don't love to keep folks in onxiety—it hain't my way.

CHAPTER XV.

ALL, from that very night Miss Trueman Pool attended to the meetin's at the Risley school-house, stiddy and constant. And before the week wuz out Joe Charnick had walked hum with her twice. And the next week he carried her to Jonesville to get the cloth for her robe, jest like his'n, white book-muslin. And twice he had come to consult her on a Bible passage, and twice she had walked up to his mother's to consult with her on a passage in the Apockraphy. And once she went up to see if her wings wuz as deep and full as his'n. She wanted 'em jest the same size.

Miss Charnick couldn't bear her. Miss Charnick wuz a woman who had enjoyed considerable poor health in her life, and she had now, and had been havin' for years, some dretful bad spells in her stomach—a sort of a tightness acrost her chest.

And Trueman's wife argued with her that her spells had been worse, and her chest had been tighter. And the old lady didn't like that at all, of course. And the old lady took thoroughwert for 'em, and Trueman's wife insisted on't that thoroughwert wuz tightenin'.

And then there wuz some chickens in a basket out on the stoop that the old hen had deserted, and Miss Charnick wuz a-bringin' 'em up by hand. And Mother Charnick went out to feed 'em, and Trueman's wife tosted her head, and said,

"she didn't approve of it—she thought a chicken ought to be brung up by a hen."

But Miss Charnick said, "Why, the hen deserted 'em; they would have perished right there in the nest."

But Trueman's wife wouldn't gin in, she stuck right to it, "that it wuz a hen's business, and nobody else's."

And, of course, she had some sense on her side, for, of course, it is a hen's business, her duty and her priveledge to bring up her chickens. But if she won't do it, why, then, somebody else has got to—they ought to be brung.

I say Mother Charnick wuz in the right on't. But Trueman's wife had got so in the habit of findin' fault and naggin' at me and the other relations on Trueman's side and her'n that she couldn't seem to stop it when she knew it wuz for her interest to stop.

And then she ketched a sight of the alpacker dress Jenette wuz a-makin', and she said "that basks had gone out."

And Miss Charnick wuz overpartial to 'em (most too partial, some thought), and thought they wuz in the height of the fashion. But Trueman's wife ground her right down on it.

"Basks wuz out, for she knew it, she had all her new ones made polenay."

And hearin' 'em argue back and forth for more'n a quarter of an hour, Jenette put in and sez (she thinks all the world of Mother Charnick), "Wall, I spoze you won't take much good of your polenays, if you have got so little time to wear 'em."

And then Trueman's wife (she wuz meen-dispositioned, anyway) said somethin' about "hired girls keepin' their place."

And then Mother Charnick flared right up and took Jenette's part. And Joe's face got red; he couldn't bear to see Jenette put upon, if she wuz makin' fun of his religion. And Trueman's wife see that she had gone too fur, and held herself in, and talked good to Jenette, and flattered up Joe, and he went home with her and staid till ten o'clock.

They spent a good deal of their time a-huntin' up passages to prove their doctrine, in the Bible, and the Apockraphy, and Josephus and others.

It beat all how many Trueman's wife would find, and every one she found Joe would seem to think the more on her. And so it run along till folks said they wuz engaged, and Josiah and me thought so, too.

And though Jenette wuzn't the one to say anythin', she begun to look kinder pale and mauger. And when I spoke of it to her, she laid it to her liver. And I let her believe I thought so, too. And I even went so fur as to recommend tansey and camomile tea, with a little catnip mixed in—I did it for blinders. I knew it wuzn't her liver that ailed her. I knew it wuz her heart. I knew it wuz her heart that wuz a-achin'.

Wall, we had our troubles, Josiah and me did. Trueman's wife wuz dretful disagreeable, and would argue us down, every separate thing we tried to do or say. And she seemed more high-headed and disagreeable than ever sence Joe had begun to pay attention to her. Though what earthly good his attention wuz a-goin' to do wuz more than I could see, accordin' to her belief.

But Josiah said "he guessed Joe wouldn't have paid her any attention if he hadn't thought that the world wuz a-comin' to a end so soon. He guessed he wouldn't want her round if it wuz a-goin' to stand."

Sez I, "Josiah, you are a-judgin' Joe by yourself." And he owned up that he wuz.

Wall, the mornin' of the thirtieth, after Josiah and me had eat our breakfast, I proceeded to mix up my bread. I had set the yeast over night, and I wuz a-moldin' it out into tins when Trueman's wife come down-stairs with her robe over her arm. She wanted to iron it out, and press the seams.

I had baked one tin of my biscuit for breakfast, and I had

kep' 'em warm for Trueman's wife, for she had been out late the night before to a meetin' to Risley school-house, and didn't come down to breakfast. I had also kep' some good coffee warm for her, and some toast and steak.

She laid her robe down over a chair-back, and sot down to her breakfast, but begun the first thing to find fault with me for bein' to work that day. She sez, "The idee, of the last day of the world, and you a-bein' found makin' riz biscuit, yeast ones!" sez she.

"Wall," sez I, "I don't know but I had jest as soon be found a-makin' riz biscuit, a-takin' care of my own household, as the Lord has commanded me to, as to be found a-sailin' round in a book-muslin Mother-Hubbard."

"It hain't a Mother-Hubbard!" sez she.

"Wall," sez I, "I said it for oritory. But it is puckered up some like 'em, and you know it." Hers wuz made with a yoke.

And Josiah sot there a-fixin' his plantin'-bag. He wuz a-goin' out that mornin' to plant over some corn that the crows had pulled up. And she bitterly reproved him. But he sez, "If the world don't come to a end, the corn will be needed."

"But it will," she sez in a cold, haughty tone.

"Wall," sez he, "if it does, I may as well be a-doin' that as to be settin' round." And he took his plantin'-bag and went out. And then she jawed me for upholdin' him.

And sez she, as she broke open a biscuit and spread it with butter previous to eatin' it, sez she, "I should think respect, respect for the great and fearful thought of meetin' the Lord, would scare you out of the idee of goin' on with your work."

Sez I, calmly, "Does it scare you, Trueman's wife?"

"Wall, not exactly scare," sez she, "but lift up, lift up fur above bread and other kitchen work."

And again she buttered a large slice, and I sez, calmly, "I

MAKING "RIZ" BISCUITS ON THE LAST DAY.

don't spoze I should be any nearer the Lord than I am now. He sez he dwells inside of our hearts, and I don't see how he could get any nearer to us than that. And, anyway, what I said to you I keep a-sayin', that I think he would approve of my goin' on calm and stiddy, a-doin' my best for the ones he put in my charge here below, my husband, my childern and my grandchildern." (I some expected Tirzah Ann and the babe home that day to dinner.)

"Wall, you feel very different from some wimmen that wuz to the school-house last night, and act very different. They are good Christian females. It is a pity you wuzn't there. P'raps your hard heart would have melted, and you would have had thoughts this mornin' that would soar above riz biscuit."

And as she sez this she begun on her third biscuit, and poured out another cup of coffee. And I, wantin' to use her well, sez, "What did they do there?"

"Do!" sez she, "why, it wuz the most glorious meetin' we ever had. Three wimmen lay at one time perfectly speechless with the power. And some of 'em screemed so you could hear 'em for half a mile."

I kep' on a-moldin' my bread out into biscuit (good-shaped ones, too, if I do say it), and sez, calmly, "Wall, I never wuz much of a screemer. I have always believed in layin' holt of the duty next to you, and doin' some things, things He has commanded. Everybody to their own way. I don't condemn yourn, but I have always seemed to believe more in the solid, practical parts of religion than the ornimental. I have always believed more in the power of honesty, truth and justice than in the power they sometimes have at camp and other meetin's. Howsumever," sez I, "I don't say but what that power is powerful, to the ones that have it, only I wuz merely observin' that it never wuz my way to lay speechless or holler much—not that I consider hollerin' wrong, if you holler from principle, but I never seemed to have a call to."

"You would be fur better if you did," sez Trueman's wife, "fur better. But you hain't good enough."

"Oh," sez I, reasonably, "I could holler if I wanted to, but the Lord hain't deef. He sez specially that he hain't, and so I never could see the use in hollerin' to him. And I never could see the use of tellin' him in public so many things as some do. Why, he knows it. He knows all these things. He don't need to have you try to enlighten him as if you wuz his gardeen—as I have heard folks do time and time ag'in. He knows what we are, what we need. I am glad, Trueman's wife," sez I, "that he can look right down into our hearts, that he is right there in 'em a-knowin' all about us, all our wants, our joys, our despairs, our temptations, our resolves, our weakness, our blindness, our defects, our regrets, our remorse, our deepest hopes, our inspiration, our triumphs, our glorys. But when he is right there, in the midst of our soul, our life, why, why should we kneel down in public and holler at him?"

"You would be glad to if you wuz good enough," sez she; "if you had attained unto a state of perfection, you would feel like it."

That kinder riled me up, and I sez, "Wall, I have lived in this house with 'em that wuz perfect, and that is bad enough for me, without bein' one of 'em myself. For more disagreeable creeters," sez I, a-prickin' my biscuit with a fork, "more disagreeable creeters I never laid eyes on."

Trueman's wife thinks she is perfect, she has told me so time and ag'in—thinks she hain't done anythin' wrong in upwards of a number of years.

But she didn't say nothin' to this, only begun ag'in about the wickedness and immorality of my makin' riz biscuit that mornin', and the deep disgrace of Josiah Allen keepin' on with his work.

But before I could speak up and take his part, for I will not hear my companion found fault with by any female but myself,

she had gathered up her robe, and swept up-stairs with it, leavin' orders for a flat-iron to be sent up.

Wall, the believers wuz all a-goin' to meet at the Risley school-house that afternoon. They wuz about forty of 'em, men and wimmen. And I told Josiah at noon, I believed I would go down to the school-house to the meetin'. And he a-feelin', I mistrust, that if they should happen to be in the right on't, and the world should come to a end, he wanted to be by the side of his beloved pardner, he offered to go, too. But he never had no robe, no, nor never thought of havin'.

The Risley school-house stood in a clearin', and had tall stumps round it in the dooryard. And we had heard that some of the believers wuz goin' to get up on them stumps, so's to start off from there. And sure enough, we found it wuz the calculation of some on 'em.

The school-boys had made steps up the sides of some of the biggest stumps, and lots of times in political meetin's men had riz up on 'em to talk to the masses below. Why, I spoze a crowd of as many as forty-five or forty-eight had assembled there at one time durin' the heat of the campain.

But them politicians had on their usual run of clothes, they didn't have on white book-muslin robes. Good land!

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL, lots of folks had assembled to the school-house when we got there, about 3 o'clock P. M.—afternoon. Believers, and world's people, all a-settin' round on seats and stumps, for the school-house wuz small and warm, and it wuz pleasanter outdoors.

We had only been there a few minutes when Mother Charnick and Jenette walked in. Joe had been there for some time, and he and the Widder Pool wuz a-settin' together readin' a him out of one book. Jenette looked kinder mauger, and Trueman's wife looked haughtily at her, from over the top of the him-book.

Mother Charnick had a woosted work-bag on her arm. There might have been a nightgown in it, and there might not. It wuz big enough to hold one, and it looked sort o' bulgy. But it wuz never known—Miss Charnick is a smart woman. It never wuz known what she had in the bag.

Wall, the believers struck up a him, and sung it through—as mournful, skairful sort of a him as I ever hearn in my hull life; and it swelled out and riz up over the pine-trees in a wailin', melancholy sort of a way, and weird—dretful weird.

And then a sort of a lurid, wild-lookin' chap, a minister, got up and preached the wildest and luridest discourse I ever hearn in my hull days. It wuz enough to scare a snipe. The very strongest and toughest men there turned pale, and wimmen cried and wept on every side of me, and wept and cried.

I myself didn't weep. But I drawed nearer to my companion, and kinder leaned up against him, and looked off on the calm blue heavens, the serene landscape, and shinin' blue lake fur away, and thought—jest as true as I live and breathe, I thought that I didn't care much, if God willed it to be so, that my Josiah and I should go side by side, that very day and minute, out of the certainties of this life into the mysteries of the other, out of the mysteries of this life into the certainties of the other.

A SORT OF A LURID, WILD-LOOKIN' CHAP.

For, thinks I to myself, we have got to go into that other world pretty soon, Josiah and me have. And if we went in the usual way, we had got to go alone, each on us. Terrible thought! We who had been together under shine and shade, in joy and sorrow. Our two hands that had joined at the alter, and had clung so clost together ever sence, had got to leggo of each other down there in front of the dark gateway.

Solemn gateway! So big that the hull world must pass through it—and yet so small that the hull world has got to go through it alone, one at a time.

My Josiah would have to stand outside and let me go down under the dark, mysterious arches, alone—and he knows jest how I hate to go anywhere alone, or else I would have to stop at the gate and bid him good-by. And no matter how much we knocked at the gate, or how many tears we shed onto it,

we couldn't get through till our time come, we had got to be parted.

And now if we went on this clear June day through the crystal gateway of the bendin' heavens—we two would be together for weal or for woe. And on whatever new, strange landscape we would have to look on or wander through, he would be right by me. Whatever strange inhabitants the celestial country held, he would face 'em with me. Close, close by my side he would go with me through that blue, lovely gateway of the soft June skies into the City of the King. And it wuz a sweet thought to me.

Not that I really wanted the world to come to a end that day. No, I kinder wanted to live along for some time, for several reasons: My pardner, the babe, the childern, etc.; and then I kinder like to live for the sake of livin'. I enjoy it.

But I can say, and say with truth and solemnity, that the idee didn't scare me none. And as my companion looked down in my face as the time approached, I could see the same thoughts that wuz writ in my eyes a-shinin' in his'n.

Wall, as the p'inter approached the hour, the excitement grew nearly, if not quite, rampant. The believers threw their white robes on over their dresses and coats, and as the p'inter slowly moved round from half-past three to quarter to four—and so on—they shouted, they sung, they prayed, they shook each other's hands—they wuz fairly crazed with excitement and fervor, which they called religion—for they wuz in earnest, nobody could dispute that.

Joe and Miss Pool kinder hung together all this time—though I ketched him givin' several wistful looks at Jenette, as much as to say, "Oh, how I hate to leave you, Jenette!"

But Miss Pool would roust him up ag'in, and he would shout and sing with the frienziedest and most zealousest of 'em.

Mother Charnick stood with her bag in her hand, and the other hand on the puckerin'-string. I don't say what she had

in the bag, but I do say this, that she had it fixed so's she could have ondone it in a secont's time. And her eyes wuz intent on the heavens overhead. But they kep' calm and serene and cloudless, nothin' to be seen there—no sign, no change—and Ma Charnick kep' still and didn't draw the puckerin'-string.

But, oh, how excitement reined and grew rampant around that school-house! Miss Pool and Joe seemin' to outdo all the rest (she always did try to), till at last, jest as the p'inter swung round to the very minute, Joe, more than half by the side of himself, with the excitement he had been in for a week, and bein' urged onto it by Miss Pool, as he sez to this day, he jumped up onto the tall stump he had been a-standin' by, and stood there in his long white robe, lookin' like a spook, if anybody had been calm enough to notice it, and he sung out in a clear voice—his voice always did have a good honest ring to it:

Farewell, my friends,
  Farewell, my foes;
Up to Heaven
  Joe Charnick goes.

And jest as the clock struck, and they all shouted and screamed, he waved his arms, with their two great white wings a-flutterin', and sprung upwards, expectin' the hull world, livin' and dead, would foller him—and go right up into the heavens.

And Trueman's wife, bein' right by the stump, waved her wings and jumped, too—jest the same direction es he jumped. But she only stood on a camp-chair, and when she fell she didn't crack no bones, it only jarred her dretfully, and hurt her acrost the small of her back to that extent that I kep' bread and milk poultices on day and night for three weeks, and lobelia and catnip, half and half; she a-arguin' at me

JOE CHARNICK GOES.

every single poultice I put on that it wuzn't her way of makin' poultices, nor her way of applyin' of 'em.

I told her I didn't know of any other way of applyin' 'em to her back, only to put 'em on it.

But she insisted to the last that I didn't apply 'em right, and I didn't crumble the bread into the milk right, and the lobelia wuzn't picked right, nor the catnip.

Not one word did she ever speak about the end of the world —not a word—but a-naggin' about everythin' else.

Wall, I healed her after a time, and glad enough wuz I to see her healed, and started off.

But Joe Charnick suffered worse and longer. He broke his limb in two places and cracked his rib. The bones of his arm wuz a good while a-healin', and before they wuz healed he wuz wounded in a new place.

He jest fell over head and ears in love with Jenette Finster. For bein' shet up to home with his mother and her (his mother wouldn't hear to Jenette leavin' her for a minute) he jest seemed to come to a full realizin' sense of her sweet nater and bright, obleegin' ways; and his old affection for her bloomed out into the deepest and most idolatrous love—Joe never could be megum.

Jenette, and good enough for him, held him off for quite a spell, but when he got cold and relapsted, and they thought he wuz goin' to die, then she owned up to him that she worshiped him—and always had.

And from that day he gained. Mother Charnick wuz tickled most to death at the idee of havin' Jenette for her own girl—she thinks her eyes on her, and so does Jenette of her. So it wuz agreeable as anything all round, if not agreeabler.

Jest as quick as she got well enough to walk, and before he got out of his bed, Trueman's wife walked over to see Joe. And Joe's mother hatin' her so, wouldn't let her step her foot into the house. And Joe wuz glad on't, so they say.

Mother Charnick wuz out on the stoop in front of the house when Trueman's wife got there, and told her that they had to keep the house still; that is, they say so, I don't know for certain, but they say that Ma Charnick offered to take Trueman's wife out to see her chickens, the ones she had brought up by hand, and Trueman's wife wantin' to please her, so's to get in, consented. And Miss Charnick showed her the hull fourteen of 'em, all fat and flourishin'—they wuz well took care of. And Miss Charnick looked down on 'em fondly, and sez :

"I lay out to have a good chicken pie the day that Joe and Jenette are married."

"Married!" sez Trueman's wife in faint and horrified axents.

"Yes; they are goin' to be married jest as soon as my son gets well enough. Jenette is fixin' a new dress for me to wear to the weddin'—with a bask," sez she with emphasis. And es she said it, they say she stooped down and gathered some sprigs of thoroughwert, a-mentionin' how much store she set by it for sickness. But if she did, Trueman's wife didn't sense it, she wuz dumbfounded and sot back by the news. And she left my home and board the week before the weddin'.

They had been married about a year when Jenette wuz here a-visitin', and she asked me in confidence (and it must be kep', it stands to reason it must), "if I spozed that book-muslin robe would make two little dresses?"

And I told her, "Good land! yes, three on 'em," and it did.

She dresses the child beautiful, and I don't know whether she would want the neighbors to know jest what and when and where she gets the materials—

It looks some like her and some like Joe, and they both think their eyes on it; but old Miss Charnick worships it—

Wall, though es I said (and I have eppisoded to a extent that is almost onprecidented and onheard on).

Though Josiah Allen made a excuse of borrowin' a plow (a plow, that time of night) to get away from my arguments

HE NEVER HAD THE TIME TO HELP.

on the Conference and Submit's kinder skairt face, and so forth, and so on—

He resoomed the conversation the next mornin' with more energy than ever. (He never said nuthin' about the plow, and I never see no sign on it, and don't believe he got it or wanted it.)

He resoomed the subject, and kep' on a-resoomin' of it from day to day and from hour to hour.

He would nearly exhaust the subject at home, and then he would tackle the wimmen on it at the Methodist meetin'-house while we Methodist wimmen wuz to work.

After leavin' me to the meetin'-house Josiah would go on to the post-office for his daily "World," and then he would stop on his way back to give us female wimmen the latest news from the Conference, and give us his idees on't.

And sometimes he would fairly harrow us to the very bone with his dretful imaginin's and fears that wimmen would be allowed to overdo herself, and ruin her health, and strain her mind by bein' permitted to set!

Why, Submit Tewksbury and some of the other weaker sisters would look fairly wild-eyed for some time after he would go. He never could stay long. Sometimes we would beset him to stay and do some little job for us to help us along with our work, such as liftin' somethin' or movin' some bench or the pulpit or somethin'.

But he never had the time; he always had to hasten home to get to work. He wuz in a great hurry with his spring's work, and full of care about that buzz-saw mill.

And that wuz how it wuz with every man in the meetin'-house that wuz able to work any. They wuz all in a hurry with their spring's work and their buzz-saws and their inventions and their agencys, etc., etc., etc.

And that wuz the reason why we wimmen wuz havin' such a hard job on the meetin'-house.

CHAPTER XVII.

OU see the way on't wuz: we had to do sumthin' to raise the minister's salary, wuz most half a year behindhand, to say nothin' of the ensuin' year a-comin'. And as I have hinted at before, but hain't gi'n petickulers, the men in the meetin'-house had all gi'n out, and said they had gi'n every cent they could, and they couldn't and they wouldn't do any more, anyway. As I have said, there wuz a hardness arozen amongst the male brethren.

Deacon Peedick thought he had gi'n more than his part in proportion, and come right out plain and said so.

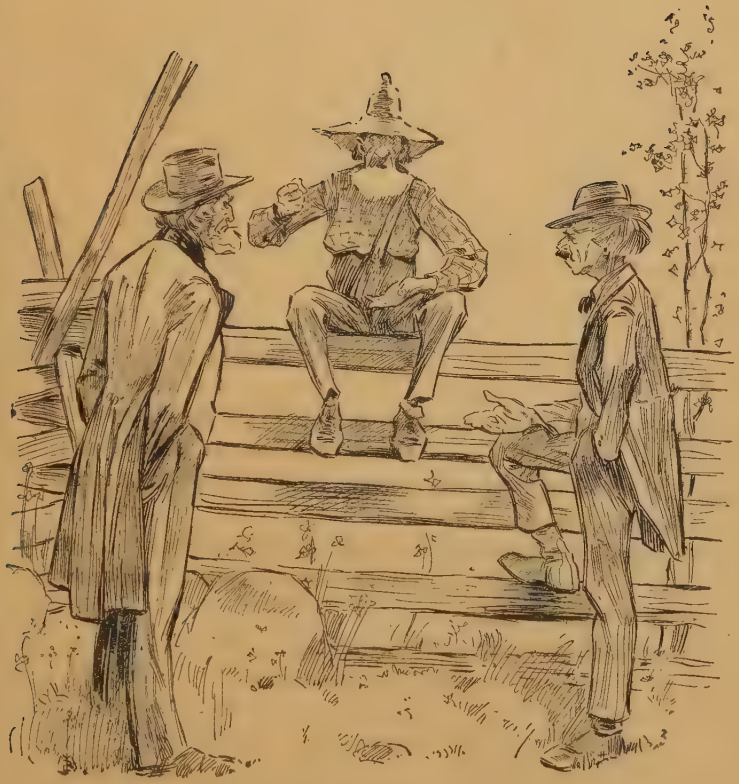
And Deacon Bobbet said "he wuzn't the man to stand it to be told right to his face that he hadn't done his share," and he said "he wuzn't the man, either, to be hinted at from the pulpit about things."

I don't believe he wuz hinted at, and Sister Bobbet don't. And she felt like death to have him so riz up in his mind, and act so. I know what the tex' wuz; it wuz these words :

"The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

The minister didn't mean nothin' only pure gospel when he preached about it. But it proved to be a tight-breasted, close-fittin' coat to several of the male brothers, and it fitted 'em so well it fairly pinched 'em.

But there it wuz, Deacon Bobbet wouldn't gin a cent, towards raisin' the money. And there wuz them that said, and stuck to it, that he said "he wouldn't give a darn cent."



"WOULDN'T GIVE A DARN CENT."

But I don't know as that is so. I wouldn't want to be the one that said that he had demeaned himself to that extent.

Wall, he wouldn't give a cent, and Peedick wouldn't give, and Deacon Henzy and Deacon Sypher wouldn't. They said that there wuz certain members of the meetin'-house that had said to certain people suthin' about buzz-saws.

I myself thought then, and think still, that the subject of buzz-saws had a great deal to do in makin' 'em act so riz up and excited. I believe the subject rasped 'em, and made 'em nervous. But when these various hardnesses arose amongst some of the brethren, the rest of the men kinder j'ined in with 'em, some on one side and some on the other, and they all baulked right out of the harness. (Allegory.) And there the minister wuz, good old creeter, jest a-sufferin' for the necessities of life, and most half a year's salery due.

I tell you it looked dark. The men all said they couldn't see no way out of the trouble, and some of the wimmen felt about so. And old Miss Henn, one of our most able sisters, she had gi'n out, she wuz as mad as her own sirname about how her Metilda had been used.

The meetin'-house had jest hauled her up for levity. And I thought then, and think now, that the meetin'-house wuz too hard on Metilda Henn.

She did titter right out in protracted meetin', Sister Henn don't deny it, and she felt dretful bad about it, and so did I. But Metilda said, and stuck to it, that she couldn't have helped laughin' if it had been to save her life.

And though I realized the awfulness of it, still, when some of the brethren wuz goin' on dretful about it, I sez to 'em:

"The Bible sez there is a time to laugh, and I don't know when that is, onless it is when you can't help it."

What she wuz a-laughin' at wuz this:

There wuz a widder woman by the name of Nancy Lum that always come to evenin' meetin's.

She wuz very tall and humbly, and she had been on the look-out (so it wuz spozed) for a third husband for some time.

She had always made a practice of saying one thing over and over to all the protracted and Conference meetin's, and she would always bust out a-cryin' before she got it all out.

She always said "she wanted to be found always at the foot of the cross."

She would always begin this remark dretful kinder loud and hysterical, and then would dwindle down kinder low at the end on't, and bustin' out into tears somewhere through it from first to last.

But this evenin' suthin' had occurred to make her more hysterical and melted down than usial (some say it wuz because Deacon Henshaw wuz present for the first time after his wife's death).

But, anyway, she riz up lookin' awful tall and humbly—she wuz most a head taller than any man there—and she sez out loud and strong:

"I want to be found—"

And then she busted right out a-cryin' hard. And she sobbed for some time. And then she begun ag'in:

"I want to be found—"

And then she busted out ag'in.

And so it went on for some time—she a-tellin' out ever and anon loud and firm "that she wanted to be found—" and then bustin' into tears.

Till finally Deacon Henshaw (some mistrust that he is on the point of gettin' after her, and he always leads the singin', anyway) he struck right out onto the him—

"Oh, that will be joyful!"

And Sister Lum sot down.

Wall, that wuz what made Metilda Henn titter. And that wuz what made me bring forward that verse of scripter.

That the Bible said "there wuz a time to laugh," and I didn't know when it wuz onless it wuz when you couldn't help it—"

But I didn't say it to uphold Metilda—no, indeed. I only said it because they wuz so bitter on her, and laid the rules of the meetin'-house down on her so heavy.

But Josiah said, "What would become of the meetin'-house if it didn't punish its unruly members?"

And I sez to Josiah, "Do you remember the case of Deacon Widrig over in Loontown? He wuz rich and influential, and when he wuz complained of, and the meetin'-house sot on him, they sot light, and you know it, Josiah Allen. And he wuz kep' in the church, the meen old creeter. And Miss Henn is a widder and poor."

"Yes," sez Josiah, calmly, "she hain't been able to help the meetin'-house much, and Brother Widrig contributes largely."

Sez I, in a fearful meanin' axent, "I hearn he did at the time he wuz up—I hearn he contributed lots to the male brethren who wuz a-judgin' him, but," sez I, "do you spoze, Josiah Allen, that if wimmen wuz allowed their way in the matter, that that man would be allowed to stay in the meetin'-house, and keep on a-makin' and a-sellin' the poisen that is sendin' men to ruin all round him?

"Makin' his hard cider by the barell and hogset, and fixin' it some way so it will make a fur worse drunk than whisky, and then supplyin' every low saloon fur and near with it, and peddlin' it out to every man and boy that wants it.

"And boys think they drink cider without doin' any harm—so he jest entices 'em down into the road to ruin, doin' as much ag'in harm as a whisky-seller.

"And mothers have to set still and see it go on. It is men that are always app'inted to deal with sinners, male or female. Men are judged by their peers, but wimmen never are.

"I wonder if that is just? I wonder how Deacon Widrig would have liked it to have had Miss Henn set on him? He

wuz dretful excited, so I hearn, about Metilda's case—thought it wuz highly incumbient on the meetin'-house to have her made a example of, so's to try to abolish such wicked doin's as snickerin' out in meetin'.

"I wonder how he would have liked it to have had Charley Lanfear's mother set on him? She is a sister in the meetin'-

"SUPPLYIN' EVERY LOW SALOON FUR AND NEAR."

house, and Charley is a ruined boy, and Deacon Widrig is jest as much the cause of his ruin—jest as guilty of murderin' all that wuz sweet and lovely in him es if he had fed arsenic to him with a teaspoon."

Sez I, "In that very meetin'-house to Loontown there are mothers who have to set and take the bread and wine tokens of the blood and body of their crucified Redeemer from a

man's hands that they know are red with the blood of their own sons. Fur redder than human blood and deeper stained with the ruin of their immortal souls.

"What thoughts does these mothers keep on a-thinkin' as they set there and see a guilty man guilty of worse than murder set up as a example to other young souls? What thoughts do they keep on a-thinkin' of the young hearts that wuz pure before this man laid holt of 'em? Young eyes that wuz true and tender till this man made 'em look on his accursed drink? Young lips that smiled on their mothers till he gin 'em that that changed the smiles to curses?

"Would a delegation of wimmen keep such a man in the meetin'-house if he paved the hull floor with fine gold? No, you know they wouldn't. Let a jury of mothers set on such a man, and see if he could get up ag'in very easy.

"They are the ones who have suffered by him, who have agonized, who went down into deeper than the Valley of Death led by his hand. They went down into that depth where they lose their boy. Lose him eternally.

"Death, jest death, would give 'em a chance to meet their child ag'in. But what hope does a mother have when down in the darkness that has no mornin', her boy tears his hand from her weak grasp, and plunges downward?

"How does such a mother feel as she sets there in a still meetin'-house, and the man who had done such deeds as Deacon Widrig passes her the emblems of a deathless love, a divine purity?"

Josiah sat demute, and didn't say nuthin', and I went on, for I wuz very roze up in my mind, and by the side of myself with emotions.

And sez I, "Take the case of Simeon Lathers. Why wuz it that Sister Irene Filkins wuz turned out of the meetin'-house and the man who wuz the first cause of her goin' astray kep' in—the handsome, smooth-faced hypocrite? It wuz because he

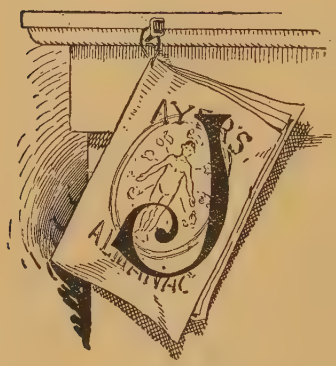
wuz rich as a Jew, and jest plastered over the consciences of them that tried him with his fine speeches and his money.

"Fixed over the meetin'-house there in Zoar, built a new steeple, a towerin' one. If wimmen had had their way that steeple would have p'inted the other way."

Josiah looked up from Ayers' almanac, which he wuz calmly perusin', and sez he:

"How a steeple would look a-p'intin' down!"

CHAPTER XVIII.



OSIAH'S face wuz smooth and placid, he hadn't took a mite of sense of what I had been a-sayin', and I knew it. Men don't. They know at the most it is only talk, wimmen hain't got it in their power to do anything. And I spoze they reason on it in this way—a little windstorm is soon over, it relieves old Natur', and don't hurt anything.

Yes, my pardner's face wuz as calm as the figger on the outside of the almanac a-holdin' the bottle, and his axent wuz mildy wonderin' and gently sarcestickle: "How a steeple would look a-p'intin' down! That is a true woman's idee."

Sez I, "I would have it a-p'intin' down towards the depths of darkness that wuz in that man's heart that roze it up, and the infamy of the deed that kep' him in the meetin'-house and turned his victim out of it."

"Id'no as she wuz his victim," sez Josiah.

Sez I, "Every one knows that in the first place Simeon Lathers wuz the man that led her astray."

"It wuzn't proved," sez Josiah, a-turnin' the almanac over and lookin' at the advertisement on the back side on't.

"And why wuzn't it proved?" sez I. "Because he held a big piece of gold against the mouths of the witnesses."

"I didn't see any in front of my mouth," sez Josiah, lookin' 'shamed, but composed.

"And you know what the story wuz," sez he, "accordin' to that, he did it all to try her faith."

I wouldn't encourage Josiah by even smilin' at his words, though I knew well what the story wuz he referred to.

It wuz at a Conference meetin' when Simeon Lathers wuz jest a-beginnin' to take notice of how pretty Irene Filkins wuz.

She had gone forward to the anxious-seat with some other young females, their minds bein' wrought on, so it wuz spozed, by Deacon Lathers' eloquent exhortations and urgin's to 'em to come forward and be saved.

And they had gone up onto the anxious-seat a-sheddin' tears, and they all knelt down there, and Deacon Lathers he went right up and knelt down right by Sister Irene Filkins, and them that wuz there say that right while he wuz a-prayin' loud and strong for 'em all, and her specially, he put his arm round her and acted in such a way that she resented it bitterly.

She wuz a good, virtuous girl then, anyway.

And she resented his overtoors in such a indignant and decided way that it drawed the attention of a hull lot of brothers and sisters towards 'em.

And Deacon Lathers got right up from his knees, and sez, "Bretheren and sisters, let us sing these lines:

"He did it all to try her faith."

I remember this story, but I wuzn't goin' to encourage Josiah Allen by lettin' my attention be drawed off by any anecdotes—nor I didn't smile—oh, no! But I went right on with a hull lot of burnin' indignation in my axents, and sez I, "Josiah Allen, can you look me in the face and say that it wuzn't money and bad men's influence that keep such men as

Deacon Widrig and Simeon Lathers in the meetin'-house?" Sez I, "If they wuz poor men, would they have been kep', or if it wuzn't for the influence of men that like hard drink?"

"Wall, as it were," sez Josiah, "I—that is—wall, it is a-gettin' bedtime, Samantha."

And he wound up the clock and went to bed.

And I set there, all rousted up in my mind, for more'n a hour, and I dropped more'n seven stitches in Josiah's heel, and didn't care if I did.

But I have eppisoded fearfully, and to resoom and go on.

Miss Henn wuz mad, and she wuz one of our most enterprizen sisters, and we felt that she wuz a great loss.

Things looked dretful dark. And Sister Bobbet, who is very tender-hearted, shed tears several times a-talkin' about the hard times that had come onto our meetin'-house, and how Zion wuz a-languishin', etc., etc.

And I told Sister Bobbet in confidence, and also in public, that it wuz time to talk about Zion's languishin' when we had done all we could to help her up. And I didn't believe Zion would languish so much if she had a little help gi'n her when she needed it.

And Miss Bobbet said "she felt jest so about it, but she couldn't help bein' cast down."

And so most all of the sisters said. Submit Tewksbury wept, and shed tears time and ag'in, a-talkin' about it, and so several of 'em did. But I sez to 'em:

"Good land!" sez I. "We have seen jest as hard times in the Methodist meetin'-house before, time and ag'in, and we wimmen have always laid holt and worked and laid plans and worked and worked, and with the Lord's help have sailed the old ship Zion through the dark waters into safety, and we can do it ag'in."

Though what we wuz to do we knew not, and the few male men who didn't jine in the business said they couldn't see

HE WOUND UP THE CLOCK AND WENT TO BED.

no way out of it, but what the minister would have to go, and the meetin'-house be shet up for a spell.

But we female wimmen felt that we could not have it so, anyway. And we j'ined together and met in each other's housen (not publickly, oh, no! we knew our places too well as Methodist sisters).

We didn't make no move in public, but we kinder met round to each other's housen, sort o' private like, and talked and talked and prayed—we all knew that wuzn't ag'inst the church rules, so we jest rastled in prayer for help to pay our honest debts, and keep the Methodist meetin'-house from disgrace, for the men wuz that worked up and madded that they didn't seem to care whether the meetin'-house come to nothin' or not. They said they wuzn't goin' to help any more.

Wall, after settin' day after day (not public settin', oh, no! we knew our places too well, and wouldn't be ketched a-settin' public till we had a right to).

After settin' and talkin' it over back and forth, we concluded the very best thing we could do wuz to give a big fair, and try to sell things enough to raise some money.

It wuz a fearful tuff job we had took onto ourselves, for we had got to make all the things to sell out of what we could get holt of, for, of course, our husbands all kep' the money-purses in their own hands, as the way of male pardners is. But we laid out to beset 'em when they wuz cleverer than common (owin' to extra good vittles) and get enough money out of 'em to buy the materials to work with, bedquilts (crazy and otherwise), embroidered towels, shawl-straps, knit socks and suspenders, rugs, chair-covers, lap-robes, etc., etc., etc.

It wuz a tremendous hard undertakin' we had took onto ourselves, with all our spring's work on hand, and not one of us sisters kep' a hired girl at the time, and we had to do our own house-cleanin', paintin' floors, makin' soap, spring sewin', etc., besides our common housework.

But the very worst on't wuz the meetin'-house wuz in such a shape that we couldn't do a thing till that wuz fixed. It wuz goin' to take a good deal of work.

The men had undertook to fix over the meetin'-house jest before the hardness commenced. The men and wimmen both had labored side by side to fix up the old house a little.

The men had said that in such church work as that wimmen had a perfect right to help, to stand side by side with the male brothers and do half, or more than half, or even all the work. They said it wuzn't ag'inst the Discipline, and all the bishops wuz in favor of it, and always had been. They said it wuz right accordin' to the Articles. But when it come to the hard and arjuous duties of drawin' saleries with 'em, or settin' up on Conferences with 'em, why, there a line had to be drawed, wimmen must not be permitted to strain herself in no such ways—nor resk the tender delicacy of her nature, by settin' in a meetin'-house as a delegate by the side of a man once a year. It wuz too resky. But we could lay holt and work with 'em in public or in private, which we felt wuz indeed a privclege, for the interests of the Methodist meetin'-house wuz dear to our heart, and so wuz our pardners' approvals—and they wuz all on 'em unanimous on this p'int—we could work all we wanted to.

So we had laid holt and worked right along with the men from day to day, with their full and free consents, and a little help from 'em till we had got the work partly done. We had got the little Sabbath-school room painted and papered, and the cushions of the main room new covered, and we had engaged to have it frescoed, but the frescoer had turned out to be a perfect fraud, and of all the lookin' things that meetin'-house wuz about the worst. The plaster, or whatever it wuz he had put on, had to be all scraped off before it could be papered, the paper wuz bought, and the scrapin' had begun.

The young male and female church members had give a

public concert together, and raised enough money to get the paper—it wuz very nice, and fifty cents a roll (double roll).

These young females appearin' in public for this purpose wuz very agreeable to the hull meetin'-house, and wuz right accordin' to the rules of the Methodist meetin'-house, for I remember I asked about it when the question first come up

APPEARIN' IN PUBLIC.

about sendin' female delegates to the Conference, and all the male members of our meetin'-house wuz so horrified at the idee.

I sez, "I'll bet there wouldn't one of the delegates yell half so loud es she that wuz Mahala Gowdey at the concert. Her voice is a sulferino of the very keenest edge and highest tone, and she puts in sights and sights of quavers."

But they all said that wuz a very different thing.

And sez I, "How different? She wuz a-yellin' in public for the good of the Methodist meetin'-house (it wuz her voice that drawed the big congregation, we all know). And them wimmen delegates would only have to 'yea' and 'nay' in a still small voice for the good of the same. I can't see why it would be so much more indelicate and unbecomin' in them," and sez I, "they would have bonnets and shawls on, and she that wuz Mahala had on a low neck and short sleeves."

But they wouldn't yield, and I wouldn't nuther.

But I am a-eppisodin' fearful, and to resoom. Wall, as I said, the scrapin' had begun. One side of the room wuz partly cleaned so the paper could go on, and then the fuss come up, and there it wuz, as you may say, neither hay nor grass, neither frescoed nor papered nor nuthin'. And of all the lookin' sights it wuz.

Wall, of course, if we had a fair in that meetin'-house we couldn't have it in such a lookin' place to disgrace us in the eyes of Baptists and 'Piscopals.

No, that meetin'-house had got to be scraped, and we wimmen had got to do the scrapin' with case-knives.

It wuz a hard job. I couldn't help thinkin' quite a number of thoughts as I stood on a barell with a board acrost it, afraid as death of fallin', and a-workin' for dear life, and the other female sisters a-standin' round on similar barells, all a-workin' fur beyond their strengths, and all afraid of fallin', and we all a-knowin' what we had got ahead on us a-paperin' and a-gettin' up the fair.

CHAPTER XIX.

COULDN'T help a-thinkin' to myself several times. It duz seem to me that there hain't a question a-comin' up before that Conference that is harder to tackle than this plasterin', and the conundrum that is up before us Jonesville wimmen how to raise three hundred dollars out of nuthin', and to make peace in a meetin'-house where anarky is now rainin' down.

But I only thought these thoughts to myself, for I knew every woman there wuz peacible and law-abidin', and there wuzn't one of 'em but what would ruther fall offen her barell than go ag'in the rules of the Methodist meetin'-house.

Yes, I tried to curb down rebellius thoughts, and did pretty much all the time.

And good land! we worked so hard that we hadn't time to tackle very curius peculier thoughts, them that wuz dretful strainin' and wearin' on the mind. Not of our own accord we didn't, fur we had to jest nip in and work the hull durin' time.

And then we all knew how deathly opposed our pardners wuz to our takin' any public part in meetin'-house matters or mountin' rostrums, and that thought quelled us down a sight.

Of course, when these subjects wuz brung up before us, and

turned round and round in front of our eyes, why, we had to look at 'em, and be rousted up by 'em more or less. It wuz nater.

And Josiah not havin' anything to do evenin's only to set and look at the ceilin'. Every single night when I would go home from the meetin'-house, Josiah would tackle me on it, on the danger of allowin' wimmen to ventur' out of her spear in meetin'-house matters, and specially the Conference.

It begin to set in New York the very day we tackled the meetin' in Jonesville with a extra grip.

So's I can truly say the meetin'-house wuz on me day and night. For workin' on it es I did, all day long, and Josiah a-talkin' about it till bedtime, and I a-dreamin' about it a sight, that and the Conference.

Truly, if I couldn't set on the Conference, the Conference sot on me from mornin' till night, and from night till mornin'.

I spoze it wuz Josiah's skairful talk that brung it onto me, it wuz brung on nitemairs mostly, in the nitetime.

He would talk very skairful, and what he called deep, and repeat pages of Casper Keeler's arguments, and they would appear to me (drawed also by nitemairs) every page on 'em lookin' fairly lurid.

I suffered.

Josiah would set with the "World" and other papers in his hand a-perusin' of 'em while I would be a-washin' up my dishes, and the very minute I would get 'em done and my sleeves rolled down he would tackle me, and often he wouldn't wait for me to get my work done up, or even supper got, but would begin on me as I filled up my tea-kettle, and keep up a stiddy drizzle of argument till bedtime, and, as I say, when he left off the nitemairs would begin.

I suffered beyond tellin' almost.

The second night of my arjuous labors on the meetin'-house he began wild and eloquent about wimmen bein' on Con-

SAMANTHA HAS "NITEMAIRS."

ferences and mountin' rostrums. And sez he, "That is suthin' that we Methodist men can't stand."

And I, havin' stood up on a barell all day a-scrapin' the ceilin', and not bein' recuperated yet from the skairtness and dizziness of my day's work, I sez to him:

"Is rostrums much higher than them barells we have to stand on to the meetin'-house?"

And Josiah said, "it wuz suthin' altogether different." And he assured me ag'in:

"That in any modest, unpretendin' way the Methodist church wuz willin' to accept wimmen's work. It wuzn't ag'inst the Discipline. And that is why," sez he, "that wimmen have all through the ages been allowed to do most all the hard work in the church—such as raisin' money for church work—earnin' money in all sorts of ways to carry on the different kinds of charity work connected with it—teachin' the childern, nursin' the sick, carryin' on hospital work etc., etc. But," sez he, "this is fur, fur different from gettin' up on a rostrum or tryin' to set on a Conference. Why," sez he, in a haughty tone, "I should think they'd know without havin' to be told that laymen don't mean women."

Sez I, "Them very laymen that are tryin' to keep wimmen out of the Conference wouldn't have got in themselves if it hadn't been for wimmen's votes. If they can legally vote for men to get in, why can't men vote for them?"

"That is the p'int," sez Josiah, "that is the very p'int I have been tryin' to explain to you. Wimmen can help men to office, but men can't help wimmen; that is law, that is statesmanship. I have been a-tryin' to explain it to you that the word laymen always means woman when she can help men in any way, but not when he can help her, or in any other sense."

Sez I, "It seemed to mean wimmen when Metilda Henn wuz turned out of the meetin'-house."

"Oh, yes," sez Josiah in a reasonin' tone, "the word layman

"IS ROSTRUMS MUCH HIGHER THAN THEM BARELLS TO STAND ON?"

always means wimmen when it is used in a punishin' and condemnatory sense, or in the case of work, and so forth, but when it comes to settin' up in high places or drawin' sallerys or anything else difficult it always means men."

Sez I, in a very dry axent, "Then the word man, when it is used in church matters, always means wimmen so fur as scrubbin' is concerned, and drowdgin' round?"

"Yes," sez Josiah, haughtily. "And it always means men in the higher and more difficult matters of decidin' questions, drawin' sallerys, settin' on Conferences, etc. It has long been settled to be so," sez he.

"Who settled it?" sez I.

"Why, the men, of course," sez he. "The men have always made the rules of the churches, and translated the Bibles, and everything else that is difficult," sez he.

Sez I, in fearful dry axents, almost husky ones, "It seems to take quite a knack to know jest when the word laymen means men and when it means wimmen."

"That is so," sez Josiah. "It takes a man's mind to grapple with it; wimmen's minds are too weak to tackle it. It is jest as it is with that word 'men' in the Declaration of Independence. Now, that word 'men' in that declaration means men some of the time, and some of the time men and wimmen both. It means both sexes when it relates to punishment, taxin' property, obeyin' the laws strictly, etc., etc., and then it goes right on the very next minute and means men only, as, to-wit, namely, votin', takin' charge of public matters, makin' laws, etc., etc.

"I tell you it takes deep minds to foller on an' see jest to a hair where the division is made. It takes statesmanship.

"Now, take that claws, 'All men are born free and equal.'

"Now, half of that means men, and the other half men and wimmen. Now, to understand them words perfect you have got to divide the tex'. 'Men are born.' That means men and

wimmen both—men and wimmen are both born, nobody can dispute that. Then comes the next claws, 'Free and equal.' Now, that means men only—anybody with one eye can see that.

"Then the claws, 'True government consists.' That means men and wimmen both—consists—of course, the government consists of men and wimmen, 'twould be a fool who would dispute that. 'In the consent of the governed.' That means men alone. Do you see, Samantha?" sez he.

I kep' my eye fixed on the tea-kettle, for I stood with my tea-pot in hand waitin' for it to bile. "I see a great deal, Josiah Allen."

"Wall," sez he, "I am glad on't. Now, to sum it up," sez he, with some the mean of a preacher—or, ruther, a exhauster—"to sum the matter all up, the words 'bretheren,' 'laymen,' etc., always means wimmen so fur as this: punishment for all offenses, strict obedience to the rules of the church, work of any kind and all kinds, raisin' money, givin' money all that is possible, teachin' in the Sabbath-school, gettin' up missionary and charitable societies, carryin' on the same with no help from the male sect, leavin' that sect free to look after their half of the meanin' of the word—sallerys, office, makin' the laws that bind both of the sexes, rulin' things generally, translatin' Bibles to suit their own idees, preachin' at 'em, etc., etc. Do you see, Samantha?" sez he, proudly and loftily.

"Yes," sez I, as I filled up my tea-pot, for the water had at last b'iled. "Yes, I see."

And I spoze he thought he had convinced me, for he acted high-headeder and haughtier for as much as an hour and a half. And I didn't say anything to break it up, for I see he had stated it jest as he and all his sect looked at it, and good land! I couldn't convince the hull male sect if I tried—clergymen, statesmen and all—so I didn't try, and I wuz truly beat out with my day's work, and I didn't drop more than one idee

more. I simply dropped this remark es I poured out his tea, and put some good cream into it—I merely sez:

"There is three times es many wimmen in the meetin'-house es there is men."

"Yes," sez he, "that is one of the p'ints I have been explainin' to you," and then he went on ag'in real high-headed, and skairt, about the old ground, of the willingness of the meetin'-house to shelter wimmen in its folds, and how much they needed guardin' and guidin', and about their delicacy of frame, and how unfitted they wuz to tackle anything hard, and what a grief it wuz to the male sect to see 'em a-tryin' to set on Conferences or mount rostrums, etc., etc.

And I didn't try to break up his argument, but simply repeated the question I had put to him, for, es I said before, I wuz tired and skairt, and giddy yet from my hard labor and my great and hazardus elevatin'; I had not, es you may say, recovered yet from my recuperation, and so I sez ag'in them words:

"Is rostrums much higher than them barells to stand on?"

And Josiah said ag'in, "it wuz suthin' entirely different;" he said barells and rostrums wuz so fur apart that you couldn't look at both on 'em in one day hardly, let alone a minute. And he went on once more with a long argument full of Bible quotations and everything.

And I wuz too tuckered out to say much more. But I did contend for it to the last that I didn't believe a rostrum would be any more tottlin' and skairful a place than the barell I had been a-standin' on all day, nor the work I'd do on it any harder than the scrapin' of the ceilin' of that meetin'-house.

And I don't believe it would; I stand jest as firm on it to-day as I did then.

CHAPTER XX.

WALL, we got the scrapin' done after three hard and arjuous days' works, and then we proceeded to clean the house. The day we set to clean the meetin'-house prior and before paperin' we all met in good season, for we knew the hardships of the job in front of us, and we all felt that we wanted to tackle it with our full strength.

Sister Henzy, wife of Deacon Henzy, got there jest as I did. She wuz in middlin' good spirits and a old yeller belzerine dress.

Sister Gowdy had the ganders and newraligy, and wore a flannel for 'em round her head, but she wuz in workin' spirits, her will wuz up in arms, and nerved up her body.

Sister Meechim wuz a-makin' soap, and so wuz Sister Sypher and Sister Mead and me. But we all felt that soap come after religion, not before. "Cleanliness next to godliness."

So we wuz all willin' to act accordin', and tackle the old meetin'-house with a willin' mind.

Wall, we wuz all engaged in the very heat of the warfare, as you may say, a-scrubbin' the floors and a-scourin' the benches by the door, and a-blackin' the two stoves that stood jest inside of the door. We wuz workin' jest as hard as wimmen ever worked, and all of the wimmen who wuzn't engaged in scourin' and moppin' wuz a-settin' round in the pews

A-MAKIN' SOAP.

a-workin' hard on articles for the fair—when all of a suddin the outside door opened and in come Josiah Allen with three of the other men bretheren.

They had jest got the great news of wimmen bein' app'inted for deaconesses, and had come down on the first minute to tell us. She that wuz Celestine Bobbet wuz the only female present that had heard of it.

Josiah had heard it to the post-office, and he couldn't wait till noon to tell me about it, and Deacon Gowdy wuz anxius Miss Gowdy should hear it as soon as possible. Deacon Sypher wanted his wife to know at once that if she wuzn't married she could have become a deaconess under his derectin'.

And Josiah wanted me to know immegiatly that I, too, could have had the priveledge, if I had been a more single woman, of becomin' a deaconess, and have had the chance of workin' all my hull life for the meetin'-house, with a man to direct my movements and take charge on me, and tell me what to do from day to day and from hour to hour.

And Deacon Henzy was anxius Miss Henzy should get the news as quick as she could. So they all hastened down to the meetin'-house to tell us.

And we left off our work for a minute to hear 'em. It wuzn't nowhere near time for us to go home.

Josiah had lots of further business to do in Jonesville, and so had the other men. But the news had excited 'em, and exhilerated 'em so that they had dropped everything, and hastened right down to tell us, and then they wuz a-goin' back ag'in immegiately.

I myself took the news coolly, or as cool as I could, with my temperature up to five or five and a half, owin' to the hard work and the heat.

Miss Gowdy also took it pretty calm. She leaned on her mop-handle, partly for rest (for she wuz tuckered out) and partly out of good manners, and didn't say much.

But Miss Sypher is such a admirin' woman, she looked fairly radiant at the news, and she spoke up to her husband in her enthusiastik, warm-hearted way:

"Why, Deacon Sypher, is it possible that I, too, could become a deacon jest like you?"

THE LAST NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE.

"No," sez Deacon Sypher, solemnly, "no, Drusilly, not like me. But you wimmen have got the priveledge now, if you are single, of workin' all your days at church under the direction of us men."

"Then I could work at the deacon trade under you," sez she, admirin'ly, "I could work jest like you—pass round the bread and wine and the contribution-box Sundays?"

"Oh, no, Drusilly," sez he, condesendin'ly; "these hard and arjuous duties belong to the male deaconship. That is their own one petickuler work that wimmen can't infringe upon. Their hull strength is spent in these duties; wimmen deacons have other fields of labor, such as relievin' the wants of the sick and sufferin', settin' up nights with smallpox patients, takin' care of the sufferin' poor, etc., etc."

"But," sez Miss Sypher (she is so good-hearted and so awful fond of the deacon), "wouldn't it be real sweet, deacon, if you and I could work together as deacons, and tend the sick, relieve the sufferers—work for the good of the church together —go about doin' good?"

"No, Drusilly," sez he, "that is wimmen's work. I would not wish for a moment to curtail the holy rights of wimmen. I wouldn't want to stand in her way and keep her from doin' all this modest, unpretendin' work for which her weaker frame and less hefty brain has fitted her.

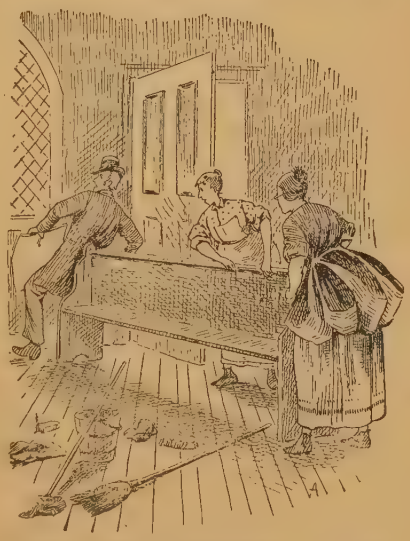
"We will let it go on in the same old way. Let wimmen have the priveledge of workin' hard, jest as she always has. Let her work all the time, day and night, and let men go on in the same sure old way of superintendin' her movements, guardin' her weaker footsteps, and bossin' her round generally."

Deacon Sypher is never happy in his choice of language, and his method of argiment is such that when he is up on the affirmative of a question, the negative is delighted, for they know he will bring victery to their side of the question. Now, he didn't mean to speak right out about men's usual way of bossin' wimmen round. It wuz only his onfortunate and transparent manner of speakin'.

And Deacon Bobbet hastened to cover up the remark by the statement that "he wuz so highly tickled that wimmen wuzn't goin' to be admitted to the Conference, because it would weaken the Conference."

"Yes," sez my Josiah, a-leanin' up ag'inst the meetin'-house door, and talkin' pretty loud, for Sister Peedick and me had gone to liftin' round the big bench by the door, and it wuz fearful heavy, and our minds wuz exercised as to the best place to put it while we wuz a-cleanin' the floor.

"You see," sez he, "we feel, we men do, we feel that it would be weakenin' to the Conference to have wimmen admitted, both on account of her own lack of strength and also from the fact that every woman you would admit would keep out a man. And that," sez he (a-leanin' back in a still easier attitude, almost a luxurious one), "that, you see, would tend naterally to weakenin' the strength of a church."



"WALL," SEZ I, "MOVE ROUND A LITTLE, WON'T YOU?"

"Wall," sez I, a-pantin' hard for breath under my burden, "jes move round a little, won't you? We want to set the bench here while we scrub under it. And," sez I, a-stoppin' a minute and rubbin' the perspiration and sweat off my face,

"Seein' you men are all here, can't you lay holt and help us move out the benches, so we can clean the floor under 'em? Some of 'em are very hefty," sez I, "and all of us sisters almost are a-makin' soap, and we all want to get done here, so we can go home and bile down; we would dearly love a little help," sez I.

"I would help," sez Josiah in a willin' tone, "I would help in a minute if I hadn't got so much work to do at home."

And all the other male brethren said the same thing—they had got to git home to git to work. (Some on 'em wanted to play checkers, and I knew it.)

But some on 'em did have lots of work on their hands, I couldn't dispute it.

CHAPTER XXI.

HY, Deacon Henzy, besides all his cares about the buzz-saw mill, and his farm-work, had bought a steam threshin'-machine that made him sights of work. It wuz a good machine. But it wuz fairly skairful to see it a-steamin' and a-blowin' right along the streets of Jonesville without the sign of a horse or ox or anything to draw it. A-puffin' out the steam and a-tearin' right along, that awful-lookin' that it skairt she that wuz Celestine Bobbet most into fits.

She lived in a back place where such machines wuz onknown, and she had come home to her father's on a visit, and wuz goin' over to visit some of his folks that day, over to Loontown.

And she wuz a-travelin' along peacible, with her father's old mair, and a-leanin' back in the buggy a-readin' a article her father had sent over by her to Deacon Widrig, a witherin' article about female deaconesses, and the stern necessity of settin' 'em apart and sanctifyen 'em to this one work—deacon work—and how they mustn't marry, or tackle any other hard jobs whatsumever, or break off into any other enterprize, only jest plain deacon work.

It wuz a very flowery article. And she wuz enjoyin' of it first-rate, and a-thinkin', for she is a little timid and easily skairt, and the piece had convinced her.

She wuz jest a-thinkin' how dretful it would be if sum female deaconess should ever venter into some other branch

of business, and what would be apt to become of her if she did. She hated to think of what her doom would most likely be, bein' tender-hearted.

When lo, and behold! jest as she wuz a-thinkin' these thoughts she see this wild and skairful machine approachin', and Deacon Henzy a-standin' up on top of it a-drivin'. He looked wild and excited, bein' very tickled to think that he

SHE SEE THIS WILD AND SKAIRFUL MACHINE APPROACH'IN'.

had threshed more with his machine, by twenty bushels, than Deacon Petengill had with his.

There wuz a bet upon these two deacons, so it wuz spozed, and he wuz a-hastenin' to the next place where he wuz to be set up, so's to lose no time, and he was kinder hollerin'.

And the wind took his gray hair back, and his long side-whiskers, and kinder stood 'em out, and the skirts of his frock the same.

His mean wuz wild.

And it wuz more than Celestine's old mair and she herself could bear; she cramped right round in the road (the mair did) and set sail back to old Bobbet'ses, and that great concern a-puffin' and a-steamin' along after 'em.

And by the time that she that wuz Celestine got there she wuz almost in a fit, and the mair in a perfect lather.

Wall, Celestine didn't get over it for weeks and weeks, nor the mair nuther.

And besides this enterprize of Deacon Henzy's, he had got up a great invention, a new rat-trap, that wuz peculier and uneek in the extreme.

It wuz the result of arjuous study on his part by night and day for a long, long time, and it wuz what he called "A Travelin' Rat-trap." It wuz designed to sort o' chase the rats round and skair 'em.

It wuz spozed he got the idee in the first place from his threshin'-machine. It had to be wound up, and then it would take after 'em—rats or mice or anythin'—and they do say that it wuz quite a success.

Only it had to move on a smooth floor. It would travel round pretty much all night; and they say that when it wuz set up in a suller it would chase the rats back into their holes, and they would set there and look out on it for the biggest heft of the night. It would take up their minds, and kep' 'em out of vittles and other mischief.

It wuz somethin' like providin' a circus for 'em.

But, howsumever, the deacon wuz a-workin' at this; he wuzn't quite satisfied with its runnin' gear, and he wuz a-perfectin' this rat-trap every leisure minute he had outside of his buzz-saw and threshin'-machine business, and so he wuz fearful busy.

Deacon Sypher had took the agency for "The Wild West, or The Leaping Cow-boy of the Plain," and wuz doin' well by it.

And Deacon Bobbet had took in a lot of mustangs to keep through the winter. And he wuz a-ridin' 'em a good deal, accordin' to contract, and tryin' to tame 'em some before spring. And this work, with the buzz-saw, took up every minute of his time.

For the mustangs throwed him a good deal, and he had to lay bound up in linements a good deal of the time, and arneky.

So, as I say, it didn't surprise me a mite to have 'em say they couldn't help us, for I knew jest how these jobs of theirn devoured their time.

And when my Josiah had made his excuse, it wuzn't any more than I had looked out for, to hear Deacon Henzy say he had got to git home to ile his threshin'-machine. One of the cogs wuz out of gear in some way.

He wanted to help us, so it didn't seem as if he could tear himself away, but that steam threshin'-machine stood in the way. And then on his way down to Jonesville that very mornin' a new idee had come to him about that travelin' rat-trap, and he wanted to get home right away to try it.

And Deacon Bobbet said that three of them mustangs he had took in to break had got to be rid that day, they wuz a-gettin' so wild he didn't hardly dast to go nigh 'em.

And Deacon Sypher said that he must hasten back, for a man wuz a-comin' to see him from way up on the state road, to try to get a agency under him for "The Leaping Cow-boy of the Plain." And he wanted to show the "Leaping Cow-boy" to some agents to the tavern in Jonesville on his way home, and to some wimmen on the old Plank road. Two or three of the wimmen had g'in hopes that they would take the "Leaping Cow-boy."

And then they said—the hull three of the deacons did—that any minute them other deacons who wuz goin' into partnership with 'em in the buzz-saw business wuz liable to drive down to see 'em about it.

TAMIN' MUSTANGS.

And some of the other men bretheren said their farms and their live stock demanded the hull of their time—every minute of it.

So we see jest how it wuz, we see these male deacons couldn't devote any of their time to the meetin'-house, nor those other bretheren nuther.

We see that their time wuz too valuable, and their own business devoured the hull on it. And we married sisters, who wuz acustemed to the strange and mysterious ways of male men, we accepted the situation jest es we would any other mysterius dispensation, and didn't say nothin'.

Good land! We wuz used to curius sayin's and doin's, every one on us. Curius as a dog, and curiuser.

But Sister Meechim (onmarried), she is dretful questionin' and inquirin' (men don't like her, they say she prys into subjects she's no business to meddle with). She sez to Josiah:

"Why is it, Deacon Allen, that men deacons can carry on all sorts of business and still be deacons, while wimmen deacons are obleeged to give up all other business and devote themselves wholly to their work?"

"It is on account of their minds," sez Josiah. "Men have got stronger minds than wimmen, that is the reason."

And Sister Meechim sez ag'in:

"Why is it that wimmen deacons have to remain onmarried while men deacons can marry one wife after another through a long life; that is, if they are took from 'em by death or a divorce lawyer?"

"Wall," sez Josiah, "that, too, is on account of their brains. Their brains hain't so hefty es men's."

But I jest waded into the argument then. I jest interfered, and sez in a loud, clear tone:

"Oh, shaw!"

And then I sez further, in the same calm, clear tones, but dry as ever a dry oven wuz in its dryest times. Sez I:

"If you men can't help us any about the meetin'-house, you'd better get out of our way, for we wimmen have got to go to scrubbin' right where you are a-standin'."

"Certainly," sez Josiah, in a polite axent, "certainly."

And so the rest of the men said.

And Josiah added to his remarks, as he went down the steps:

"You had better get home, Samantha, in time to cook a hen and make some puddin', and so forth."

And I sez, with quite a lot of dignity, "Have I ever failed, Josiah Allen, to have good dinners for you, and on time, too?"

"No," sez he, "but I thought I would jest stop to remind you of it, and also to tell you the last news from the Conference about the deaconesses."

And so they trailed down one after another, and left us to our work in the meetin'-house; but as they disapered round the corner Sister Arvilly Lanfear, who hain't married, and who has got a sharp tongue (some think that is why, but I don't; I believe Arvilly has had chances).

But, anyway, she sez, as they went down the steps:

"I'll bet them men wuz a-practisen their new parts of men superentendents, and look on us as a lot of deaconesses."

"Wall," sez Sister Gowdy—she loves to put on Arvilly—"wall, you have got one qualificati'n, Arvilly!"

"Yes, thank the Lord," sez she.

And I never asked what she meant, but knew well enough that she spoke of her single state. But Arvilly has had chances, I think.

CHAPTER XXII.

GOT home in time to get a good supper, though mebbe I ortn't to say it.

Sure enough, Josiah Allen had killed a hen, and dressed it ready for me to brile, but it wuz young and tender, and I knew it wouldn't take long, so I didn't care.

Good land! I love to humor him, and he knows it.

Casper Keeler come in jest as I wuz a-gettin' supper, and I thought like as not he would stay to supper; I laid out to ask him. But I didn't take no more pains on his account. No, I do jest as well by Josiah Allen from day to day as if he wuz company, or lay out to.

Casper come over on a errent about that buzz-saw mill. He wuz in dretful good spirits, though he looked kinder peaked.

He had jest come home from the city.

It happened dretful curius, but jest at this time Casper Keeler had had to go to New York on business. He had to sign some papers that nobody else couldn't sign.

His mother had hearn of a investment there that promised to pay dretful well, so she had took a lot of stock in it, and it had riz right up powerful. Why, the money had increased fourfold, and more, too, and Casper bein' jest come of age, had to go and sign suthin' or other.

Wall, he went round and see lots of sights in New York. His ma's money that she had left him made him fairly luxurius as to comfort, and he had plenty of money to go sight-seein' as much as he wanted to.

He went to all the theaters and operas and shows of all kinds, and museums, and the Brooklyn bridge, and circuses, and receptions, and etcetery, etcetery.

He wuz a-tellin' me how much money he spent while he wuz there, kinder boastin' on it; he had went to one of the biggest, highest tavrens in the hull village of New York, where the price wuz higher than the very highest pinakle on the top of it, fur higher.

CASPER KEELER.

And I sez, "Did you go to the Woman's Exchange and the Workin' Wimmen's Association that wuz held there while you wuz there?"

And he acted real scorfin'. Wimmen's work!" sez he. "No, indeed! I had too much on my hands, and too much comfort to take in higher circles than to take in any such little trifles as wimmen's work."

Sez I, "Young man, it is a precious little you would take in in life if it hadn't been for wimmen's work. Who earned and left you the money you are a-usin'?" sez I, "who educated you and made your life easy before you?"

And then bein' fairly drove into a corner, he owned up that his mother wuz a good woman.

But his nose wuz kinder lifted up the hull of the time he wuz a-sayin' it, as if he hated to own it up, hated to like a dog.

But he got real happified up and excited afterwards in talkin' over with Josiah what he see to the Conference. He stayed to supper; I wuz a-seasonin' my chicken and mashed potatoes, and garnishin' 'em for the table. I wuz out to one side a little, but I listened with one side of my brain while the other wuz fixed on pepper, ketchup, parsley, etc., etc.

Sez Casper, "It wuz the proudest, greatest hour of my life," sez he, "when I see a nigger delegate git up and give his views on wimmen keepin' down in their place. When I see a black nigger stand up there in that Conference and state so clearly, so logically and so powerfully the reasons why poor weak wimmen should not be admitted into that sacred enclosure—

"When I see even a nigger a-standin' there, and a-knowin' so well what wimmen's place wuz, my heart beat with about the proudest emotions I have ever experienced. Why, he said," sez Casper, "that if wimmen wuz allowed to stand up in the Conference, they wouldn't be satisfied. The next thing they would want to do would be to preach. It wuz a masterly argument," sez Casper.

"It must have been," sez my Josiah.

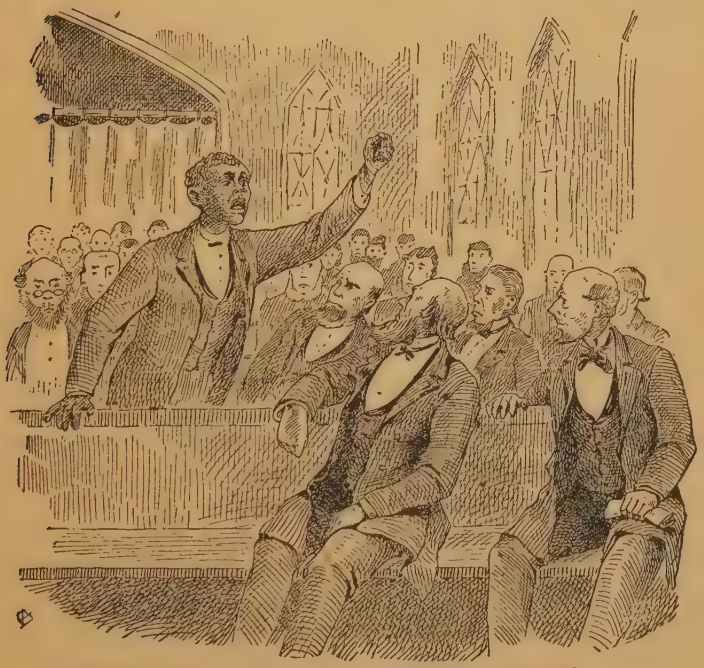
"He seemed to have such a horrow of a weak-minded, helpless woman a-raisin' herself up out of her lower spear."

"Well he might," sez Josiah, "well he might."

Truly, there are times when wimmen can't, seemin'ly, stand no more. This wuz one on 'em, and I jest waded right into the argiment. I sez, real solemn-like, a-holdin' the sprig of parsley some like a septer, only more sort o' riz up like and mysteriuser. Yes, I held that green sprig some as the dove did when it couldn't find no rest for the soles of its feet—no foundation under it, and it sailed about seekin' some mount of

truth it could settle down on. Oh, how wobblin' and onsubstantial and curius I felt hearin' their talk!

"And," sez I, "nobody is tickleder than I be to think a colored man has had the right gi'n him to stand up in a Conference or anywhere else. I have probable experienced more emotions in his behalf," sez I, "deep and earnest, than any



"HE SEEMED TO HAVE A HORROW OF WOMAN A-RAISIN' OUT OF HER LOWER SPEAR."

other female, ancient or modern. I have bore his burdens for him, trembled under his lashes, agonized with him in his onexampled griefs and wrongs and indignities, and I have rejoiced at the very depths of my soul at his freedom.

"But," sez I, "when he uses that freedom to enchain

another and as deservin' a race, my feelin's are hurt, and my indignations are riz up.

"Yes," sez I, a-wavin' that sprig some like a warlike banner, as my emotions swelled up under my bask waste,

"When that negro stands there a-advocatin' the slavery of another race, and a-sayin' that wimmen ortn't to say her soul is her own, and wimmen are too weak and foolish to lift up their right hands, much less preach, I'd love to ask him where he and his race wuz twenty-five years ago, and where they would be to-day if it wuzn't for a woman usin' her right hand and her big heart and brain in his behalf, and preachin' for him all over the world, and in almost every language under the sun. Everybody says that 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' wuz the searchin' harrow that loosened the old, hard ground of slavery so the rich seed of justice could be planted and bring forth freedom.

"If it hadn't been for that woman's preachin', that negro exhauster would to-day most likely be a hoin' cotton with a overseer a-lashin' him up to his duties, and his wife and childern and himself a-bein' bought and sold and borrowed and lent and mortgaged and drove like so many animals. And I'd like to have riz right up in that Conference and told him so."

"Oh, no," sez Josiah, lookin' some meachin', "no, you wouldn't."

"Yes, I would," sez I. "And I'd 've enjoyed it richly," sez I, es I turned and put my sprig round the edge of the platter. Casper wuz demute for as much as half a minute, and Josiah Allen looked meachin' for about the same length of time.

But, good land! how soon they got over it. They wuz as chipper as ever, a-runnin' down the idee of wimmen settin', before they got half through dinner.

After hard and arjuous work we got the scrapin' done and the scrubbin' done, and then we proceeded to make a move towards puttin' on the paper.

But the very day before we wuz to put on our first breadth Sister Bobbet, our dependence and best paperer, fell down on a apple-parin', and hurt her ankle-j'int so's she couldn't stand on a barell for more'n several days. And we felt dretful cast down about it, for we all felt as if the work must stop till Sister Bobbet could be present and attend to it.

But, as it turned out, it wuz perfectly providential, so fur as I wuz concerned, for on goin' home that night fearful depressted on account of Sister Sylvester Bobbet, lo and behold! I found a letter there on my own mantletry-piece that completely turned round my own plans.

It come entirely onexpected to me, and contained the startlin' intelligence that my own cousin, on my mother's own side, had come home to Loontown to his sister's, and wuz very sick with nervous prostration, neuralgia, rheumatism, etc., and expected paralasys every minute, and heart failure and such.

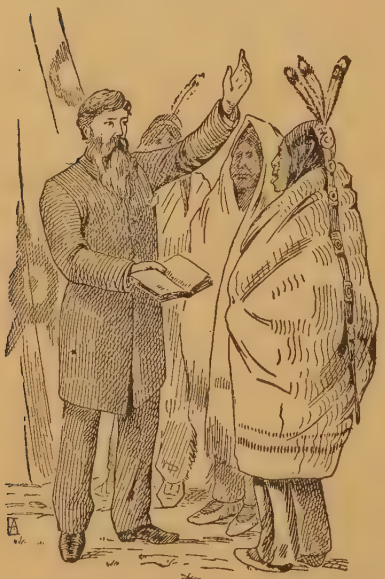
And his sister, Miss Timson, who wrote the letter, beset me to come over and see him. She said, Jane Ann did (Miss Timson'ses name is Jane Ann), and sez she in post-scriptum remark to me, sez she:

"Samantha, I know well your knowledge of sickness and your powers of takin' care of the sick. Do come and help me take care of Ralph, for it seems as if I can't let him go. Poor boy, he has worked so hard, and now I wuz in hopes that he wuz goin' to take some comfort in life, unbeknown to him. Do come and help him for my sake and for Rosy's sake." Rosy wuz Ralph's only child, a pretty girl, but one ruther wild, and needin' jest now a father's strong hand.

Rosy's mother died when she wuz a babe, and Ralph, who had always been dretful religius, felt it to be his duty to go and preach to the savages. So Miss Timson took the baby, and Ralph left all his property with Miss Timson to use for her, and then he girded up his lions, took his Bible and himbook, and went out West and tackled the savages.

Tackled 'em in a perfectly religius way, and done sights of good, sights and sights. For all he wuz so mild and gentle and religius, he got the upper hand of them savages, and brung 'em into the church by droves, and they jest worshiped him.

Wall, he worked so hard a-tryin' to do good and save souls that wuz lost—a-tryin' single-handed to overthrow barberus beliefs and habits, and set up the pure and peaceful doctrines of the Master he loved and followed, that his health gin out after a time—he felt weak and mauger.



RALPH SMITH ROBINSON.

And jest about this time his sister wrote to him that Rosy havin' got in with gay companions, wuz a-gettin' beyond her influence, and she needed a father's control and firm hand to guide her right, or else she would be liable to go to the wrong, and draw lots of others with her, for she wuz a born leader amongst her mates, jest as her father wuz—so wouldn't Ralph come home.

Wall, Ralph come. His sister and girl jest worshiped him, and looked and longed for his comin' as only tender-hearted wimmen can love and worship a hero. For if there wuz ever a hero it wuz Ralph Smith Robinson.

Wall, Ralph had been in the unbroken silences of nater so long that the clack and crash and clamor of what we call civilized life almost crazed him.

THE SAVAGES WAR-WHOOPED SOME.

He had been where his Maker almost seemed to come down and walk with him through the sweet, unbroken stillnesses of mornin' and evenin'. The world seemed so fur off to him, and the Eternal Verities of life so near, that truly it sometimes seemed to him as if, like one of old, "he walked with God."

Of course, the savages war-whooped some, but they wuz still a good deal of the time, which is more than you can say for Yankees.

And Loontown when he got home was rent to its very twain with a presidential election.

Ralph suffered.

But above all his other sufferin's he suffered from church-bells.

Miss Timson lived, as it wuz her wish, and often her boast, right under the droppin's of the sanctuary.

She lotted on it when she bought the place. The Baptist steeple towered up right by the side of her house. Her spare bed wuz immegiately under the steeple.

Wall, comin' as he did from a place where he wuz called to worship by the voice of his soul and his good silver watch—this volume of clamor, this rushin' Niagara of sound a-pourin' down into his ears, wuz perfectly intolerable and onbearable. He would lay awake till mornin' dreadin' the sound, and then colapse under it, till it run along and he come down with nervous fever.

He wuz worn out no doubt by his labors before he come, and, anyway, wuz took bed-sick, and couldn't be moved, so the doctor said, and he bein' outside of his own head, delerius, couldn't, of course, advance no idees of his own, so he lay and suffered.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MISS TIMSON'S letter wuz writ to me on the sixth day of his sickness, and Josiah and me set sail for Loontown on the follerin' day after we got it.

I laid the case before the female sisters of the meetin'-house, and they all counselled me to go. For, as they all said, on account of Sister Bobbet's fallin' on the apple-parin' we could not go on with the work of paperin' the meetin'-house, and so the interests of Zion wouldn't languish on account of my absence for a day or two, anyway. And, as the female sisters all said, it seemed as if the work I wuz called to in Loontown wuz a fair and square case of duty, so they all counselled me to go, every one on 'em. Though, as wuz nateral, there wuz several divisions of opinions as to the road I should take a-goin' there, what day I should come back, what remiedies wuz best for me to recommend when I got there, what dress I should wear, and whether I should wear a handkerchif-pin or not—or a bib-apron or a plain-banded one, etc., etc., etc., etc.

But, as I sez, as to my goin' they wuz every one on 'em unanimus. They meen well, those sisters in the meetin'-house do, every one on 'em.

Josiah acted real offish at first about goin'. And he laid the case before the male brothers of the meetin'-house, for Josiah

wuz fearful the interests of the buzz-saw mill would languish in his absence. One or two of the weaker bretheren j'ined in with him, and talked kinder deprestin' about it.

But Deacon Sypher and Deacon Henzy said they would guard his interests with eagle visions, or something to that effect, and they counselled Josiah that it wuz his duty to go.

We hearn afterwards that Deacon Sypher and Deacon Henzy wanted to go into the North Woods a-fishin' and a-huntin' for two or three days, and it has always been spozed by me that that accounted for their religius advice to Josiah Allen.

THE RETURN OF THE HUNTERS.

Howsumever, I don't know that. But I do know that they started off a-fishin' the very day we left for Loontown, and that they come back home about the time we did, with two long strings of trout.

And there wuz them that said that they ketched the trout, and them that said they bought 'em.

And they brung back the antlers of a deer in their game-bags, and some bones of elk. And there are them that sez that they dassent either one of 'em shoot off a gun, not hardly a pop-gun. But I don't know the truth of this. I know what they said, they said the huntin' wuz excitin' to the last degree, and the fishin' superb.

And there wuz them that said that they should think the huntin' would be excitin', a-rummagin' round on the ground

for some old bones, and they should think the fishin' would be superb, a-dippin' em out of a barell and stringin' 'em onto their own strings.

But their stories are very large, that I know. And each one on 'em, accordin' to their tell, ketched more trouts than the other one, and fur bigger ones, and shot more deers.

Wall, Deacon Sypher'ses advice and Deacon Henzy's influenced Josiah Allen a good deal, and I said quite a few words to him on the subject, and, suffice it to say, that the next day, about ten A. M., we set out on our journey to Loontown.

Miss Timson and Rosy seemed dretful glad to see me, but they wuz pale and wan, wanner fur than I expected to see 'em; but after I had been there a spell I see how it wuz. I see that Ralph wuz their hero as well as their love, and they worshiped him in every way, with their hearts and their souls and their idealized fancies.

Wall, he wuz a noble-lookin' man as I ever see, fur or near, and as good a one as they make, he wuz strong and tender, so I couldn't blame 'em.

And though I wouldn't want Josiah to hear me say too much about it, or mebby it would be best that he shouldn't, before I had been there twenty-four hours I begun to feel some as they did. But my feelin's wuz strictly in a meetin'-house sense, strictly.

But I begun to feel with them that the middle of the world wuz there in that bedroom, and the still, white figure a-layin' there wuz the center, and the rest of the world wuz a-revolvin' round him.

His face wuz worn and marked by the hand of Time and Endeavor. But every mark wuz a good one. The soul, which is the best sculptor, after all, had chiseled into his features the marks of a deathless endeavor and struggle toward goodness, which is God. Had marked it with the divine sweetness and passion of livin', and toilin' for the good of others.

SUPERB FISHIN'.

He had gi'n his life jest as truly to seek and save them that wuz lost as ever any old prophet and martyr had sence the world began. But under all these heavenly expressions that a keen eye could trace in his good-lookin' face could be seen a deathly weakness, the consumin' fire that wuz a-consumin' of him.

Miss Timson wept when she see me, and Rosy threw herself into my arms, and sobbed. But I gently ondid her arms from round my neck, and give Miss Timson to understand that I wuz there to help 'em if I could.

"For," sez I, softly, "the hull future time is left for us to weep in, but the present wuz the time to try to help Ralph S. Robinson.

Wall, I laid to, Josiah a-helpin' me nobly, a-pickin' burdock-leaves or beet-leaves, as the case might be, and a-standin' by me nobly all through the follerin' night (that is, when he wuz awake). Josiah and me took care on him all that night, Miss Timson refusin' to give him into the charge of underlin's, and we a-offerin' and not to be refused.

Wall, Josiah slept some, or, that is, I spoze he did. I didn't hear much from him from ten P. M. to five A. M., only once I heard him murmur in his sleep, "buzz-saw mill."

But every time I would come out into the settin'-room where he sot, and roust him up to get sunthin' for me, he would say, almost warmly:

"Samantha, that last remark of your'n wuz very powerful."

And I wouldn't waste any time nor hisen by tellin' him that I hadn't made no remark, nor thought on't. I see it would hurt his feelin's, specially as he would add in haste:

"That he didn't see how folks needed so much sleep; as for him, it wuz a real treat to keep awake all night, now and then."

No, I would let it go, and ask him for burdock or beet, as the case might be. Truly, I had enugh on my mind and heart that night without disputin' with my Josiah.

Ralph S. Robinson would lay lookin' like a dead man some of the time, still and demute, and then he would speak out in a strange language, stranger than any I ever heard. He would preach sermons in that language, I a-knowin' it wuz a sermon by his gestures, and also by my feelin's. And then he would shet up his eyes and pray in that strange, strange tongue, and anon breakin' out into our own language. And once he said:

"And now may the peace of God be with you all. Amen. The peace of God! the peace! the peace!"

His voice lingered sort o' lovin'ly over that word, and I felt that he wuz a-thinkin' then of the real peace, the unbroken stillness, outside and inside, that he invoked.

Rosy would steal in now and then like a sweet little shadow, and bend down and kiss her pa, and cry a little over his thin, white hands which wuz a-lyin' on the coverlet, or else lifted in that strange speech that sounded so curius to us, a-risin' up out of the stillness of a Loontown spare bedroom on a calm moonlit evenin'.

Wall, Friday and Saturday he wuz crazier'n a loon, more'n half the time he wuz, but along Saturday afternoon the doctor told us that the fever would turn some time the latter part of the night, and if he could sleep then, and not be disturbed, there would be a chance for his life.

Wall, Miss Timson and Rosy both told me how the ringin' of the bells seemed to roust him up and skair him (as it were), and git him all excited and crazy. And they both wuz dretful anxius about the mornin' bells which would ring when Ralph would mebby be sleepin'. So thinkin' it wuz a case of life and death, and findin' out who wuz the one to tackle in the matter, I calmly tied on my bonnet, and walked over and tackled him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IT wuz Deacon Garven, and he wuz a close communion Baptist by perswaision, and a good man, so fur as firm morals and sound creed goes.

Some things he lacked; he hadn't no immagination at all, not one speck. And in makin' him up, it seems as if he had a leetle more justice added to him to make up a lack of charity and pity. And he had a good deal of sternness and resolve gi'n him to make up, I spoze, for a lack of tenderness and sweetness of nater.

A good sound man Deacon Garven wuz, a man who would cheat himself before he would cheat a neighber. He wuz jest full of qualities that would hender him from ever takin' a front part in a scandel and a tragedy. Yes, if more men wuz like Deacon Garven the pages of the daily papers would fairly suffer for rapiners, embezzlers, wife-whippers, etc.

Wall, he wuz in his office when I tackled him. The hired girl asked me if I come for visitin' purposes or business, and I told her, firmly, "business!"

So she walked me into a little office one side of the hall, where, I spoze, the deacon transacted the business that come up on his farm, and then he wuz justice of the peace, and trustee of varius concerns (every one of 'em good ones).

He is a tall, bony man, with eyes a sort of a steel gray, and thin lips ruther wide, and settin' close together. And without lookin' like one, or, that is, without havin' the same features at all, the deacon did make me think of a steel trap. I spoze

it wuz because he wuz so sound and sort o' firm. A steel trap is real firm when it lays holt and tries to be.

Wall, I begun the subject carefully, but straight to the p'int, as my way is, by tellin' him that Ralph S. Robinson wuz a-layin' at death's door, and his life depended on his gettin' sleep, and we wuz afraid the bells in the mornin' would roust him up, and I had come to see if he would omit the ringin' of 'em in the mornin'.

"Not ring the bells?" sez he, in wild amaze. "Not ring the church-bells on the Sabbath day?"

His look wuz skairful in the extreme, but I sez:

"Yes, that is what I said, we beg of you as a Christian to not ring the bells in the mornin'."

"A Christian! A Christian! Advise me as a Christian to not ring the Sabbath bells!"

I see the idee skairt him. He wuz fairly pale with surprise and horrow. And I told him ag'in, puttin' in all the petickulers it needed to make the story straight and good, how Ralph S. Robinson had labored for the good of others, and how his strength had gi'n out, and he wuz now a-layin' at the very p'int of death, and how his girl and his sister wuz a-breakin' their hearts over him, and how we had some hopes of savin' his life if he could get some sleep, that the doctors said his life depended on it, and ag'in I begged him to do what we asked.

But the deacon had begin to get over bein' skairt, and he looked firm as anybody ever could, as he sez, "The bells never hurt anybody, I know, for here I have lived right by the side of 'em for twenty years. Do I look broke down and weak?" sez he.

"No," sez I, honestly. "No more than a grannit monument or a steel trap."

"Wall," sez he, "what don't hurt me won't hurt nobody else."

"But," sez I, "folks are made up different." Sez I, "The

Bible sez so, and what might not hurt you might be the ruin of somebody else. Wuz you ever nervous?" sez I.

"Never," sez he. And he added, firmly, "I don't believe in nerves. I never did. There hain't no use in 'em."

"It wuz a wonder they wuz made, then," sez I. "As a generel thing the Lord don't make things there hain't no use on. Howsumever," sez I, "there hain't no use in disputin' back and forth on a nerve. But, anyway, sickness is so fur apart from health that the conditions of one state can't be compared to the other; as Ralph S. Robinson is now, the sound of the bells, or any other loud noise, means torture and agony to him, and I am afraid death. And I wish you would give orders to not have 'em rung in the mornin'."

"Are you a professor?" sez he.

"Yes," sez I.

"What perswaision?" sez he.

"Methodist Episcopal," sez I.

"And do you, a member of a sister church, which although it has many errors, is still a-gropin' after the light! Do you counsel me to set aside the sacred and time-honored rules of our church, and allow the Sabbath to go by unregarded, have the sanctuary desecrated, the cause of religion languish—I cannot believe it. Think of the widespread desolation it would cause if, as the late lamented Mr. Selkirk sung:

"The sound of the church-going bells
These valleys and hills never heard.

"No church, no sanctuary, no religius observances!"

"Why, sez I, "that wouldn't hinder folks from goin' to church. Folks seem to get to theaters, lectures and disolvin' views on time, and better time than they do to meetin'," sez I. "In your opini'n it hain't necessary to beat a drum and sound on a bugle as the Salvation Army duz, to call folks to meetin'; you are dretful hard on them, so I hear."

"Yes, they make a senseless, vulgar, onnecessary racket, disturbin' and agrivatin' to saint and sinner."

"But," sez I, "they say they do it for the sake of religion."

"Religion hain't to be found in drum-sticks," sez he, bitterly.

"No," sez I, "nor in a bell-clapper."

"Oh," sez he, "that is a different thing entirely, that is to call worshipers together, that is necessary."

Sez I, "One hain't no more necessary than the other, in my opinion."

Sez he, "Look how fur back in the past the sweet bells have sounded out."

"Yes," sez I, candidly, "and in the sweet past they wuz necessary," sez I. "In the sweet past there wuzn't a clock nor a watch, the houses wuz fur apart, and they needed bells. But now there hain't a house but what is runnin' over with clocks —everybody knows the time; they know it so much that time is fairly a drug to 'em. Why, they time themselves right along through the day, from breakfast to midnight. Time their meals, their business, their pleasures, their music, their lessons, their visits, their visitors, their pulse-beats and their dead-beats. They time their joys and their sorrows, and everything and everybody, all through the week, and why should they stop short off Sundays? Why not time themselves on goin' to meetin'? They do, and you know it. There hain't no earthly need of the bells to tell the time to go to meetin' no more than there is to tell the time to put on the tea-kettle to get supper. If folks want to go to meetin' they will get there, bells or no bells, and if they don't want to go, bells hain't a-goin' to get 'em started.

"Take a man with the Sunday 'World' jest brung in, a-layin' on a lounge, with his feet up in a chair, and kinder lazy in the first place, bells hain't a-goin' to start him.

"And take a woman with her curl-papers not took down and a new religius novel in her hand, and a miliner that dis-

ap'inted her the night before, and bells hain't a-goin' to start her. No, the great bell of Moscow won't start 'em.

"And take a good Christian woman, a widow, for instance, who loves church work, and has a good handsome Christian pasture, who is in trouble, lost his wife, mebby, or sunthin' else bad, and the lack of bells hain't a-goin' to keep that woman back, no, not if there wuzn't a bell on earth."

"Oh, wall, wavin' off that side of the subject," sez he (I had convinced him, I know, but he wouldn't own it, for he knew well that if folks wanted to go they always got there, bells or no bells). "But," sez he, wavin' off that side of the subject, "the observance is so time-honored, so hallowed by tender memories and associations all through the past."

"Don't you spoze, Deacon Garven," sez I, "that I know every single emotion them bells can bring to anybody, and felt all those memories and associations. I'll bet, or I wouldn't be afraid to bet, if I believed in bettin', that there hain't a single emotion in the hull line of emotions that the sound of them bells can wake up but what I have felt, and felt 'em deep, too, jest as deep as enybody ever did, and jest as many of 'em. But it is better for me to do without a upliftin', soarin' sort of a feelin', ruther than have other people suffer agony."

"Agony!" sez he, "talk about their causin' agony, when there hain't a more heavenly sound on earth."

"So it has been to me," sez I, candidly. "To me they have always sounded beautiful, heavenly. Why," sez I, a-lookin' kinder fur off, beyond Deacon Garven, and all other troubles, as thoughts of beauty and insperation come to me borne out of the past into my very soul by the tender memories of the bells —thoughts of the great host of believers who had gathered together at the sound of the bells—the great army of the Redeemed—

"Some of the host have crossed the flood, and some are crossin' now,"

thinks I, a-lookin' way off in a almost rapped way. And then I sez to Deacon Garven in a low, soft voice, lower and more softer fur than I had used to him:

"Don't I know what it is to stand a-leanin' over the front gate on a still spring mornin', the smell of the lilacs in the air, and the brier roses? A dew sparklin' on the grass under the maples, and the sunshine a-fleckin' the ground between 'em, and the robins a-singin' and the hummin'-birds a-hoverin' round the honeysuckles at the door? And over all and through all, and above all, clear and sweet, comin' fur off a-floatin' through the Sabbath stillness, the sound of the bells a-bringin' to us sweet Sabbath messages of love and joy. Bringin' memories, too, of other mornin's as fair and sweet, when other ears listened with us to the sound, other eyes looked out on the summer beauty, and smiled at the sound of the bells.

"Heavenly emotions, sweet emotions come to me on the melody of the bells, peaceful thoughts, inspirin' thoughts of the countless multitude that has flocked together at the sound of the bells. The aged feet, the eager youthful feet, the childern's feet, all, all walkin' to the sound of the bells. Thoughts of the happy youthful feet that set out to walk side by side at their ringin' sounds. Thoughts of the aged ones grown tired, and goin' to their long dreamless sleep to their solemn sound. Thoughts of the brave heros who set out to protect us with their lives while the bells wuz ringin' out their approval of such deeds. Thoughts of how they pealed out joyfully on their return bearin' the form of Peace. Thoughts of how the bells filled the mornin' and evenin' air, havin' throbbed and beat with every joy and every pain of our life, till they seem a part of us (as it were), and the old world would truly seem lonesome without 'em.

"As I told you, and told you truly, I don't believe there is a single emotion in the hull line of emotions, fur or near, but what them bells have rung into my very soul.

"But such emotions, beautiful and inspirin' though they are, can be dispensed with better than justice and mercy can. Sweet and tender sentiment is dear to me, truly, near and dear, but mercy and pity and common sense have also a powerful grip onto my right arm, and have to lead me round a good deal of the time.

"Beautiful emotion, when it stands opposed to eternal justice, ort to step gently aside and let justice have a free road. Sentiment is truly sweet, but any one can get along without it, take it right along through the year, better than they can without sleep.

"You see, if you can't sleep you must die, while a person can worry along a good many years without sentiment. Or, that is, I have been told they could. I don't know by experience, for I have always had a real lot of it. You see, my experience has been such that I could keep sentiment and comfort, too. But my mind is such that I have to think of them that hain't so fortunate as I am.

"I have looked at the subject from my own standp'int, and have tried also to look at it through others' eyes, which is the only way we can get a clear, straight light on any subject. As for me, as I have said, I would love to hear the sweet, fur-off sound of the bells a-tremblin' gently over the hills to me from Jonesville; it sounds sweeter to me than the voices of the robins and swallers a-comin' home from the South in the spring of the year. And I would deerly love to have it go on and on as fur as my own feelin's are concerned. But I have got to look at the subject through the tired eyes, and feel it through the worn-out nerves of others, who are sot down right under the wild clamor of the bells.

"What comes to me as a heavenly melody freighted full of beautiful sentiment and holy rapture comes to them as an intolerable agony, a maddenin' discord, that threatens their sanity, that rouses 'em up from their fitful sleep, that murders

sleep—the bells to them seem murderus, strikin' noisily with brazen hands at their hearts.

"To them tossin' on beds of nervous sufferin', who lay for hours fillin' the stillness with horror, with dread of the bells, where fear and dread of 'em exceed the agony of the clangor of the sound when it comes at last. Long nights full of a wakeful horror and expectancy, fur worse than the realization of their imaginin's. To them the bells are a instrument of torture jest as tuff to bear as any of the other old thumb-screws and racks that wrung and racked our old 4 fathers in the name of Religion.

"I have to think of the great crowd of humanity huddled together right under the loud clangor of the bells whose time of rest begins when the sun comes up, who have toiled all night for our comfort and luxury. So we can have our mornin' papers brought to us with our coffee. So we can have the telegraphic messages bringin' us good news with our toast. So's we can have some of our dear ones come to us from distant lands in the mornin'. I must think of them who protect us through the night so we can sleep in peace.

"Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of these, our helpers and benefacters, work all night for our sakes, work and toil. The least we can do for these is to help 'em to the great Restorer, sleep, all we can.

"Some things we can't do; we can't stop the creakin' sounds of the world's work; the big roar of the wheel of business that rolls through the week-days can't be oiled into stillness; but Sundays they might get a little rest. Sunday is the only day of rest for thousands of men and wimmen, nervous, pale, worn by their week's hard toil.

"The creakin' of the wheels of traffic are stopped on this day. They could get a little of the rest they need to carry on the fight of life to help support wife, child, father, husband; but religion is too much for 'em—the religion that the Bible

declares is mild, peacible, tender. It clangs and bangs and whangs at 'em till the day of rest is a torment.

"Now, the Lord wouldn't approve of this. I know He wouldn't, for He was always tender and pitiful, full of compassion. I called it religion for oritory, but it hain't religion, it is a relict of old Barberism, who, under the cloak of Religion, whipped quakers and hung prophetic souls, that the secrets of heaven had been revealed to, secrets hidden from the coarser, more sensual vision."

Sez Deacon Garven: "I consider the bells as missionarys. They help spread the gospel."

"And," sez I, for I wuz full of my subject, and kep' him down to it all I could, "Ralph S. Robinson has spread the gospel over acres and acres of land, and brung in droves and droves of sinners into the fold without the help of church or steeple, let alone bells, and it seems es if he ortn't to be tortured to death now by 'em."

"Wall," he said, "he viewed 'em as gospel means, and he couldn't, with his present views of duty to the Lord, omit 'em."

Sez I, "The Lord didn't use 'em. He got along without 'em."

"Wall," he said, "it wuz different times now."

Sez I, "The Lord, if He wuz here to-day, Deacon Garven, if He had bent over that form racked with pain and sufferin' and that noise of any kind is murderus to, He would help him, I know He would, for He wuz good to the sick, and tenderhearted always."

"Wall, I will help him," sez Deacon Garven, "I will watch, and I will pray, and I will work for him."

Sez I, "Will you promise me not to ring the bells to-morrow mornin'; if he gets into any sleep at all durin' the twenty-four hours, it is along in the mornin', and I think if we could keep him asleep, say all the forenoon, there would be a chance for him. Will you promise me?"

DEPT NO
RELIGIOUS
BIGOTS
THIS WAY TO THE PITTLESS BOT.
COOKING LESSONS GIVEN FREE BY HA-SHOU-SKEEPER
THIS WAY TO THE ARTIST & EDITOR — BARBECUE.
DEACON GARVEN
HOISTING MACHINERY, RUN BY THE 'FOOLS GAS ENGINE'
L. GEEBLES ENGINEER.

AN APARTMENT OVERLOOKED BY DANTE.

"Wall," sez he, kinder meltin' down a little, "I will talk with the bretheren."

Sez I, "Promise me, Deacon Garven, before you see 'em."

Sez he, "I would, but I am so afraid of bringin' the cause of religion into contempt. And I dread meddlin' with the old established rules of the church."

Sez I, "Mercy and justice and pity wuz set up on earth before bells wuz, and I believe it is safe to foller 'em."

But he wouldn't promise me no further than to talk with the bretheren, and I had to leave him with that promise. As things turned out afterwards, I wuz sorry, sorry es a dog, that I didn't shet up Deacon Garven in his own smoke-house, or cause him to be shet and mount a guard over him, armed nearly to the teeth with clubs.

But I didn't, and I relied some on the bretheren.

Ralph wuz dretful wild all the fore part of the night. He'd lay still for a few minutes, and then he would get all rousted up, and he would set up in bed and call out some words in that strange tongue.

And he would lift up his poor weak right arm, strong then in his fever, and preach long sermons in that same strange, curius language. He would preach his sermon right through, earnest and fervent as any sermon ever wuz. I would know it by the looks of his face. And then he would sometimes sing a little in that same singular language, and then he would lay down for a spell.

But along towards mornin' I see a change, his fever seemed to abate and go down some—very gradual, till jest about the break of day he fell into a troubled sleep—or it wuz a troubled sleep at first, but growin' deeper and more peaceful every minute. And along about eight o'clock he wuz a-sleepin' sweet for the first time durin' his sickness; it wuz a quiet, restful sleep, and some drops of persperation and sweat could be seen on his softened features.

We all wuz as still, almost, as if we wuz automatoes, we wuz so afraid of makin' a speck of noise to disturb him. We kep' almost breathless in our anxiety to keep every mite of noise out of his room. But I did whisper to Rosy in a low, still voice:

"Your father is saved, the Lord be praised, we shall pull him through."

AND I THOUGHT HE WUZ PRONOUNCIN' A BENEDICTION ON THE SAVAGES.

She jest dropped onto her knees, and laid her head in my lap, and wept, but soft and quiet, so's it wouldn't disturb a mice.

Miss Timson wuz a-prayin', I could see that. She wuz a-returnin' thanks to the Lord for his mercy.

As for me, I sot demute in that hushed and darkened room, a-watchin' every shadow of a change that might come to his features, with a teaspoon ready to my hand, to give him nourishment at the right time if he needed it, or medicine.

When all of a sudden—slam! bang! rush! roar! slam! slam! ding! dong! bang!!! come right over our heads the wild, deafenin' clamor of the bells.

Ralph started up wilder than ever because of his momentary repose. He never knew us, nor anything, from that time on, and after sufferin' for another twenty-four hours, sufferin' that made us all willin' to have it stop, he died.

And so he who had devoted his hull life to religion wuz killed by it. He who had gi'n his hull life for the true wuz murdered by the false.

His last move wuz to spread out his hands, and utter a few of them strange words, as if in benediction over a kneelin' multitude. And I thought then, and I think still, that he wuz pronouncin' a benediction on the savages. And I have always hoped that the mercy he besought from on high at that last hour brought down God's pity and forgiveness on all benighted savages and bigoted ones, Deacon Garven, and the hull on 'em.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE very next day after I got home from Miss Timson'ses we wimmen all met to the meetin'-house ag'in as usial, for we knew very well that the very hardest and most arjuous part of our work lay before us.

For it had been hard and tuckerin' to what it seemed the utmost limit of tucker, to stand up on a lofty barell, and lift up one arm, and scrape the ceilin', what would it be, so we wildly questioned our souls and each other, to stand up on the same fearful hites, and lift up both arms over our heads, and get on them fearful lengths of paper smooth.

I declare, when the hull magnitude of the task we had tackled riz before us it skairt the hull on us, and nuthin' but our deathless devotion to the Methodist meetin'-house kep' us from startin' off to our different homes on the run.

But lovin' it as we did, as the very apples in our eyes, and havin' in our constant breasts a determinate to paper that meetin'-house or die in the attempt, we made ready to tackle the job.

Yet such wuz the magnitude of the task and our fearful apprehensions, that after we had looked the ceilin' all over, and examined the paper—we all sot down, as it were, instinctivcly, and had a sort of a conference meetin' (we had to wait for the paste to bile, anyway, it wuz bein' made over the stove in the front entry).

The subject of our conference wuz our great work already

accomplished, and to be undertook. The big fair that wuz a-loomin' up ahead on us, and what each one on us wuz a-goin' to do for this same fair.

And jest how he would get holt of the money to buy the materials that we had to have, to make up the articles to carry to the fair.

WE SET AND LAID ON OUR PLANS, AND CUT THE EDGES OFFEN THE PAPER.

We all knew and realized only too well what fearful hard work it wuz for a woman to get holt of a cent of money to give away in charity; it is all she can do, more'n a good deal of the time, to get money to buy necessaries with—so we all set and confided in each other, and conferred, and laid on our plans,

and cut the edges offen the paper at the same time, for we all felt that we couldn't set idle in such a time as this.

Wall, cuttin' the edges offen the paper we found wuz a long and petickuler job, and by the time we got ready to paste the first breath—the paste havin' been sot out to cool on the ground in a ten-quart pan—the very first move we made with the brush the handle come out.

Another delay and reverse for us, but we took it middlin' calm, and Miss Gowdy offered to be the one to carry it back to Jonesville, and change it that very afternoon, for we could not afford to buy a new one, and we had the testimony of as many as twenty-one or two pairs of eyes that the handle didn't come out by our own carelessness, but by its own inherient weakness —so we spozed he would swap it, we spozed so. But it wuz arrainged before we disbanded (the result of our conference), that the next mornin' we would each one on us bring our offerin's to the fair, and hand 'em in to the treasurer, so's she would know in time what to depend on, and what she had to do with. And we agreed (also the result of our conference) that we would, each on us, tell jest how we got the money and things to give to the fair.

And then we disbanded and started off home, but I'll bet that each one on us, in a sort of secret, onbeknown way, gin a look on that lofty ceilin', them dangerus barells and that pile of paper, and groaned a low, melancholy groan all to herself.

I know I did, and I know Submit Tewksbury did, for I stood close to her and heard her. But then to be exactly jest, and not a mite underhanded, I ort mebby to say that her groan may be caused partly by the fact that that anniversary of her'n wuz a-drawin' so near. Yes, the very next day wuz the day jest twenty years ago that Samuel Danker went away from Submit Tewksbury to heathen lands. Yes, the next day wuz the one that she always set the plate on for him—the gilt-edged chiny with pink sprigs.

RAISIN' THE SORELL COLT.

But I'll bet that half or three quarters of that low, melancholy groan of her'n wuz caused by the hardness of the job that loomed up in front of us, and the hull of mine wuz.

Wall, that night Josiah Allen wuz a-feelin' dretful neat, for he had sold our sorell colt for a awful big price.

It wuz a good colt; its mother wuz took sick when it wuz a few days old, and we had brung it up as a corset, or ruther I did, for Josiah Allen at that time had the rheumatiz to that extent that he couldn't step his foot on the floor for months, so the care of the corset come on me, most the hull on it, till it got big enough to run out in the lot and git its own livin'.

Night after night I used to get up and warm milk for it when it wuz very small, for it wuz weakly, and we didn't know as we could winter it.

We kep' it in a little warm shed offen the wood-house for quite a spell, but still I used to find it considerable cold when I would meander out there in a icy night to feed it.

But jest as it is always the way with wimmen, the more care I took on it, the more it needed me and depended on me, the better I liked it.

Till I got to likin' it so well that it wuzn't half so hard a job for me to go out to feed it in the night as it would have been to laid still in my warm bed and think mebby it wuz cold and hungry.

So I would pike out, and feed it two or three times a night.

That is the nater of wimmen, the weaker it wuz and the humbler it wuz, and the more it needed me, the more I thought on it.

And as is the nater of man, Josiah Allen didn't seem to care so much about it while it wuz weak and humbly and spindlin'.

He told me time and ag'in that I couldn't save it, and it never would amount to anything, and wuzn't nothin' but legs, anyway, and lots of other slightin' remarks. And he'd call it "horse corset" in a kind of a light, triflin' way that wuz apt to

gaul a woman when she come back with icy nightgown and frosty toes and fingers, way along in the night.

He'd wake up, a-layin' there warm and comfortable on his soft goose-feather piller, and say to me:

"Been out to tend to your 'horse corset,' have you?"

"Horse corset! Wall, what if it wuz?"

"BEEN OUT TO TEND TO YOUR 'HORSE CORSET,' HAVE YOU?"

Such language in the night from a warm, comfortable pardner to a cold one is apt to make words back and forth.

And then he'd speak of its legs ag'in in the most slightin' terms—and he'd ask me if I didn't want its picter took—etc., etc., etc.

(I believe one thing that ailed Josiah Allen wuz he didn't want me to get up and get my feet so cold.)

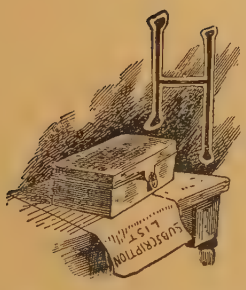
But, as I wuz a-sayin', though I couldn't deny some of his words, for truly its legs did seem to be at the least calculation a yard and a half long, specially in the night, why, they'd look fairly pokerish.

And though I knew it wuz humbly, still I persevered, and at last it got to thrivin' and growin' fast. And the likelier it grew, and the stronger, and the handsomer, so Josiah Allen's likin' for it grew and increased, till he got to settin' a sight of store by it.

And now it wuz a two-year-old, and he had sold it for two hundred and fifteen dollars. It wuz spozed it wuz goin' to make a good trotter.

Wall, seein' he had got such a big price for the colt, and knowin' well that I wuz the sole cause of its bein' alive at this day, I felt that it wuz the best time in the hull three hundred and sixty-five days of the year to tackle him for sunthin' to give to the fair. I felt that the least he could do would be to give me ten or fifteen dollars for it. So consequently after supper wuz out of the way, and the work done up, I tackled him.

CHAPTER XXVI.



E' wuz jest a-countin' out his money prior to puttin' it away in his tin box, and I laid the subject before him strong and eloquent, jest the wants and needs of the meetin'-house, and jest how hard we female sisters wuz a-workin', and jest how much we needed some money to buy our ingregiences with for the fair.

He set still, a-countin' out his money, but I know he heard me. There wuz four fifty-dollar bills, a ten and a five, and I felt that at the very least calculation he would hand me out the ten or the five, and mebby both on 'em.

But he laid 'em careful in the box, and then pulled out his old pocket-book out of his pocket, and handed me a ten-cent piece. I wuz mad. And I hain't a-goin' to deny that we had some words. Or at least I said some words to him, and gin him a middlin' clear idee of how I felt on the subject.

Why, the colt wuz more mine than his in the first place, and I didn't want a cent of money for myself, but only wanted it for the good of the Methodist meetin'-house, which he ort to be full as interested in as I wuz.

Yes, I gin him a pretty lucid idee of what my feelin's wuz on the subject, and spozed mebby I had convinced him. I wuz a-standin' with my back to him a-ironin' a shirt for him when I finished up my piece of mind. And thought more'n as likely as not he'd break down and be repentant, and hand me out a ten-dollar bill.

But no, he spoke out as pert and cheerful as anything, and sez he:

"Samantha, I don't think it is necessary for Christians to give such a awful sight. Jest look at the widder's mit."

I turned right round and looked at him, holdin' my flat-iron in my right hand, and sez I:

"What do you mean, Josiah Allen? What are you talkin' about?"

"Why, the widder's mit that is mentioned in Scripter, and is talked about so much by Christians to this day. Most probable it wuz a odd one, I dare persume to say she had lost the mate to it. It specially mentions that there wuzn't but one on 'em. And jest see how much that is talked over, and praised up clear down the ages to this day. It couldn't have been worth more'n five cents, if it wuz worth that."

"How do you spell mit, Josiah Allen?" sez I.

"Why, m-i-t-e, mit."

"I should think," sez I, "that that spells mite."

"Oh, well, when you are a-readin' the Bible, all the best commentaters agree that you must use your own judgment. Mite! What sense is there in that? Widder's mite! There hain't any sense in it, not a mite."

And Josiah kinder snickered here, as if he had made a dretful cute remark, bringin' the "mite" in in that way. But I didn't snicker, no, there wuzn't a shadow or trace of anything to be heard in my linement, but solemn and bitter earnest. And I set the flat-iron down on the stove, solemn, and took up another, solemn, and went to ironin' on his shirt-collar ag'in with solemnity and deep earnest.

"No," Josiah Allen continued, "there hain't no sense in that—but mit! there you have sense. All wimmen wear mits; they love 'em. She most probable had a good pair, and lost one on 'em, and then give the other to the church. I tell you it takes men to translate the Bible, they have such a realizin'

sense of the weaknesses of wimmen, and how necessary it is to translate it in such a way as to show up them weaknesses, and quell her down, and make her know her place, make her know that man is her superior in every way, and it is her duty as well as priveledge to look up to him."

And Josiah Allen crossed his left leg over his right one, as haughty and overbearin' a crossin' as I ever see in my life, and looked up haughtily at the stovepipe-hole in the ceilin', and resoomed:

"But, as I wuz sayin' about her mit, the widder's, you know. That is jest my idee of givin', equinomical, savin', jest as it should be."

"Yes," sez I, in a very dry axent, most as dry as my flat-iron, and that wuz fairly hissin' hot. "She most probable had some man to advise her, and to tell her what use the mit would be to support a big meetin'-house."

Oh, how dry my axent wuz! It wuz the very dryest and most irony one I keep by me—and I keep dretful ironikle ones to use in cases of necessity.

"Most probable," sez Josiah, "most probable she did." He thought I wuz praisin' men up, and he acted tickled most to death.

"Yes, some man without any doubt advised her, told her that some other widder would lose one of her'n, and give hers to the meetin'-house, jest the mate to her'n. That is the way I look at it," sez he, "and I mean to mention that view of mine on this subject the very next time they take up a subscription in the meetin'-house and call on me."

But I turned and faced him then with the hot flat-iron in my hand, and burnin' indignation in my eyes, and sez I:

"If you mention that, Josiah Allen, in the meetin'-house, or to any livin' soul on earth, I'll part with you." And I would, if it wuz the last move I ever made.

But I gin up from that minute the idee of gettin' anything

out of Josiah Allen for the fair. But I had some money of my own that I had got by sellin' three pounds of fresh geese-feathers and a bushel of dried apples, every feather picked by me, and every quarter of apple pared and peeled and strung and dried by me. It all come to upwards of seven dollars, and I took every cent of it next day out of my under bureau draw, and carried it to the meetin'-house, and gin it to the treasurer, and told 'em, at the request of the hull on 'em, jest how I got the money.

And so the hull of the female sisters did, as they handed in their money, told jest how they come by it.

Sister Moss had seated three pairs of childern's trouses for young Miss Gowdy, her childern are very hard on their trouses (slidin' down the banesters and such). And young Miss Gowdy is onexperienced yet in mendin' so the patches won't show. And Sister Moss had got forty-seven cents for the job, and brung it all, every cent of it, with the exception of three cents she kep' out to buy peppermint drops with. She has the colic fearful, and peppermint sometimes quells it.

Young Miss Gowdy wuz kep' at home by some new, important business (twins). But she sent thirty-two cents, every cent of money she could rake and scrape, and that she had scrimped out of the money her husband had gi'n her for a woosted dress. She had sot her heart on havin' a ruffle round the bottom (he didn't give her enough for a overskirt), but she concluded to make it plain, and sent the ruffle-money.

And young Sister Serena Nott had picked geese for her sister, who married a farmer up in Zoar. She had picked ten geese at two cents apiece, and Serena that tender-hearted that it wuz like pickin' the feathers offen her own back.

And then she is very timid, and skairt easy, and she owned up that while the pickin' of the geese almost broke her heart, the pickin' of the ganders almost skairt her to death. They wuz very high-headed and warlike, and though she put a

THEY WUZ VERY HIGH-HEADED AND WARLIKE.

stockin' over their heads, they would lift 'em right up, stockin' and all, and hiss and act, and she said she picked 'em at what seemed to her at the resk of her life.

But she loved the meetin'-house, so she grin and bore it, as the sayin' is, and she brung the hull of her hard-earned money, and handed it over to the treasurer, and everybody that is at all educated knows that twice ten is twenty. She brung twenty cents.

Sister Grimshaw had, and she owned it right out and out, got four dollars and fifty-three cents by sellin' butter on the sly. She had took it out of the butter-tub when Brother Grimshaw's back wuz turned, and sold it to the neighbors for money at odd times through the year, and besides gettin' her a dress cap (for which she wuz fairly sufferin'), she gin the hull to the meetin'-house.

There wuz quite dubersome looks all round the room when she handed in the money, and went right out, for she had a errent to the store.

And Sister Gowdy spoke up, and said she didn't exactly like to use money got in that way.

But Sister Lanfear sprunted up and brung Jacob right into the argument, and the Isrealites who borrowed jewelry of the Egyptians, and then she brung up other old Bible characters, and held 'em up before us.

But still some on us felt dubersome. And then another sister spoke up and said the hull property belonged to Sister Grimshaw, every mite of it, for he wuzn't worth a cent when he married her—she wuz the widder Bettenger, and had fine property. And Grimshaw hadn't begun to earn what he had spent sence (he drinks). So, sez she, it all belongs to Sister Grimshaw by right.

Then the sisters all begin to look less dubersome. But I sez:

"Why don't she come out openly and take the money she wants for her own use, and for church work and charity?"

"Because he is so hard with her," sez Sister Lanfear, "and tears round so, and cusses, and commits so much wickedness. He is willin' she should dress well—wants her to—and live well. But he don't want her to spend a cent on the meetin'-house. He is a atheist, and he hain't willin' she should help on the cause of religion. And if he knows of her givin' any to the cause, he makes the awfullest fuss, scolds and swears and threatens her, so's she has been made sick by it time and ag'in."

"Wall," sez I, "what business is it to him what she does with her own money and her own property?"

I said this out full and square. But I confess that I did feel a little dubersome in my own mind. I felt that she ort to have took it more openly.

And Sister Grimshaw's sister Amelia, who lives with her (onmarried and older than Sister Grimshaw, though it hain't spozed to be the case, for she has hopes yet, and her age is kep'). She had been and contoggled three days and a half for Miss Elder Minkley, and got fifty cents a day for contogglin'.

She had fixed over the waists of two old dresses, and contoggled a old dress skirt so's it looked most as well as new. Amelia is a good contoggler and a good Christian. And I shouldn't be surprised any day to see her snatched away by some widower or bachelder of proper age. She would be willin', so it is spozed.

Wall, Sister Henn kinder relented at the last, and brung two pairs of fowls, all picked, and tied up by their legs. And we thought it wuz kinder funny and providential that one Henn should bring four more of 'em.

But we wuz tickled, for we knew we could sell 'em to the grocerman at Jonesville for upwards of a dollar bill.

And Submit Tewksbury, what should that good little creeter bring, and we couldn't any of us hardly believe our eyes at first, and think she could part with it, but she did bring that plate. That pink-edged chiny plate, with gilt sprigs, that she

had used as a memorial of Samuel Danker for so many years. Sot it up on the supper-table, and wept in front of it.

Wall, she knew old chiny like that would bring a fancy price, and she hadn't a cent of money she could bring, and she wanted to do her full part towards helpin' the meetin'-house along—so she tore up her memorial, a-weepin' on it for hours, so I spozed, and offered it up, a burnt chiny offerin' to the Lord.

SUBMIT TEWKSBURY DID BRING THAT PLATE.

Wall, I am safe to say that nothin' that had took place that day had begun to affect us like that.

To see that good little creeter lookin' pale and considerable wan, hand in that plate and never groan over it, nor nothin', not out loud she didn't, but we spozed she kep' up a silent groanin' inside of her, for we all knew the feelin' she felt for the plate.

It affected all on us fearfully. But the treasurer took it, and thanked her almost warmly, and Submit merely sez, when she wuz thanked:

"Oh, you are entirely welcome to it, and I hope it will fetch a good price, so's to help the cause along."

And then she tried to smile a little mite. But I declare that smile wuz more pitiful than tears would have been. It seemed made up, more than half, of unshed tears and withered hopes and disappointed dreams, etc., etc. Wall, she gin, I guess, about two of 'em, and then she went and sot down.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ND now I am goin' to relate the very singulerist thing that ever happened in Jonesville, or the world, although it is eppisodin' to tell on it now, and also a-gettin' ahead of my story, and hitchin', as you may say, my cart in front of my horse. But it has got to be told, and I don't know but I may as well tell it now as any time.

Mebby you won't believe it. I don't know as I should myself, if it wuz told to me; that is, if it come through two or three. But, anyway, it is the livin' truth.

That very night as Submit Tewksbury sat alone at her supper-table, a-lookin' at that vacant spot on the table-cloth opposite to her, where the plate laid for Samuel Danker had set for over twenty years, she heard a knock at the door, and she got up hasty, and wiped away her tears, and opened the door.

A man stood there in the cold a-lookin' into the warm, cosy little room. He didn't say nothin', he acted strange. He gin Submit a look that pierced clear to her heart (so they say). A look that had in it the crystallized love and longin' of twenty years of faithfulness and heart-hunger and homesickness. It wuz a strange look.

Submit's heart begun to flutter, and her face grew red and then white, and she sez in a little fine tremblin' voice:

"Who be you?"

And he sez:

"I am Samuel Danker."

And then they say she fainted dead away, and fell over the rockin'-chair, he not bein' near enough to ketch her.

And he brung her to on a burnt feather that fell out of the chair-cushion when she fell. There wuz a small hole in it, so they say, and the feather oozed out.

"I AM SAMUEL DANKER."

I don't tell this for truth, I only say that they say thus and so.

But as to Samuel's return, that I can swear to, and so can Josiah. And that they wuz married that very night of his return, that, too, can be swore to. A old minister who lived

next door to Submit—supcrannuated, but life enough in him to marry 'em safe and sound, a-performin' the ceremony.

It made a great stir in Jonesville, almost enormus.

But they wuz married safe enough, and happy as two gambolin' lambs, so they say. Anyway, Submit looks ten years younger than she did, and I don't know but more. I don't know but she looked eleven or twelve years younger, and Samuel, why, they say it is a perfect sight to see how happy he looks, and how he has renewed his age.

The hull affair wuz very pleasin' to the Jonesvillians. Why, there wuzn't more'n one or two villians but what wuz fairly delighted by it, and they wuz spozed to be envius.

And I drew several morals from it, and drew 'em quite a good ways, too, over both religius and seckuler grounds.

One of the seckuler ones wuz drawed from her not settin' the table for him that night, for the first time for twenty years, givin' away the plate, and settin' on (with tears) only a stun chiny one for herself.

How true it is that if a female woman keeps dressed up slick, piles of extra good cookin' on hand and her house oncommon clean, and she sets down in a rockin'-chair lookin' down the road for company.

They don't come!

But let her on a cold mornin' leave her dishes onwashed, and her floors onswept, and put on her husband's old coat over her meanest dress, and go out (at his urgent request) to help him pick up apples before the frost spiles 'em. She a-layin' out to cook up some vittles to put onto her empty shelves when she goes into the house, she not a-dreamin' of company at that time of day.

They come!

Another moral and a more religius one. When folks set alone sheddin' tears on their empty hands, that seem to 'em to be emptied of all hope and happiness forever. Like es not

some Divine Compensation is a-standin' right on the door-steps, ready to enter in, and dwell with 'em.

Also that when Submit Tewksbury thought she had gi'n away for conscience sake her dearest treasure, she had a dearer one gi'n to her—Samuel Danker by name.

Also I drew other ones of varius sizes, needless to recapitulate, for time is hastenin', and I have eppisoded too fur, and to resoom, and take up ag'in on my finger the thread of my discourse, that I dropped in the Methodist meetin'-house at Jonesville, in front of the treasurer.

Wall, Submit brought the plate.

Sister Nash brought twenty-three cents all in pennys, tied up in the corner of a old handkerchif. She is dretful poor, but she had picked up these here and there doin' little jobs for folks.

And we hadn't hardly the heart to take 'em, nor the heart to refuse takin' 'em, she wuz so set on givin' em. And it wuz jest so with Mahala Crane, Joe Cranes'ses widder.

She, too, is poor, but a Christian, if there ever wuz one. She had made five pair of overhawls for the clothin'-store in Loontown, for which she had received the princely revenue of fifty cents.

She handed the money over to the treasurer, and we wuz all on us extremely worked upon and wrought up to see her do it, for she did it with such a cheerful air. And her poor old calico dress she had on wuz so thin and wore out, and her dingy alpaca shawl wuz thin to mendin' and all darned in spots. We all felt that Mahala had ort to took the money to get her a new dress.

But we dasted none on us to say so to her. I wouldn't have been the one to tell her that for a dollar bill, she seemed to be so happy a-givin' her part towards the fair, and for the good of the meetin'-house she loved.

Wall, Sister Meechim had earned two dollars above her

SISTER ARVILLY LANFEAR CANVASSIN' FOR A BOOK.

wages—she is a millinner by perswaision, and works at a millinner's shop in Jonesville. She had earned the two dollars by stayin' and workin' nights after the day's work wuz done.

And Sister Arvilly Lanfear had earned three dollars and twenty-eight cents by canvassin' for a book. The name of the book wuz:

"The Wild, Wicked and Warlike Deeds of Man."

And Arvilly said she had took solid comfort a-sellin' it, though she had to wade through snow and slush half way up to her knees some of the time, a-trailin' round from house to house a-takin' orders for it. She said she loved to sell a book that wuz full of truth from the front page to the back bindin'.

As for me, I wouldn't gin a cent for the book, and I remember we had some words when she come to our house with it. I told her plain that I wouldn't buy no book that belittled my companion, or tried to—sez I, "Arvilly, men are jest as good as wimmen and no better, not a mite better."

And Arvilly didn't like it, but I made it up to her in other ways. I gin her some lamb's-wool yarn for a pair of stockin's most immegiately afterwards, and a half bushel of but'nuts. She is dretful fond of but'nuts.

Wall, Sister Shelmadine had sold ten pounds of maple sugar, and brought the worth on it.

And Sister Henzy brung four dollars and a half, her husband had gi'n her for another purpose, but she took it for this, and thought there wuzn't no harm in it, as she laid out to go without the four dollars and a half's worth. It wuz fine shoes he had gi'n the money for, and she calculated to make the old ones do.

And Sister Henzy's mother, old Miss Balch, she is eighty-three years old, and has inflamatery rheumatiz in her hands, which makes 'em all swelled up and painful. But Sister Henzy said her mother had knit three pairs of fringed mittens (the hardest work for her hands she could have laid holt

of, and which must have hurt her fearful). But Miss Henzy said a neighbor had offered her five dollars for the three pairs, and so she felt it wuz her duty to knit 'em to help the fair along. She is a very strong Methodist, and loved to forward the interests of Zion.

She wuz goin' to give every cent of the money to the meetin'-house, so Sister Henzy said, all but ten cents, that she had to have to get Pond's Extract with to bathe her hands. They wuz in a fearful state.

OLD MISS BALCH.

We all felt bad for old Miss Balch, and I don't believe there wuz a woman there but what gin her some different receipt for helpin' her hands, besides sympathy, lots and lots of it, and pity.

Wall, Sister Sypher'ses husband is clost, very clost with her. She don't have anything to give, only her labor, as well off as they be. And now he wuz so wrapped up in that buzz-saw mill business that she wouldn't have dasted to approach him, anyway; that is, to ask him for a cent.

Wall, what should that good little creeter do but gin all the money she had earned and saved, onbeknown to her husband, durin' the past year or two, and which she had laid by for emergincies or bunnets, and etcetery, etcetery.

She had got over two dollars and seventy-five cents, which she handed right over to the treasurer of the fair to get materials for fancy work. When they wuz got she proposed to knit three pairs of men's socks out of zephyr woosted, and she said she wuz goin' to try to pick enough strawberrys to buy a pair of the socks for Deacon Sypher. She said it would be a comfort for her to do it, for they would be so soft for the deacon's feet.

Wall, Sister Gowdy wuz the last one to gin in the dress gi'n to her by her uncle out to the Ohio. It wuz gi'n her to mourn for her mother-in-law in.

And what should that good, willin' creeter do but bring that dress and gin it to the fair to sell.

We hated to take it, we hated to like dogs, for we knew Sister Gowdy needed it.

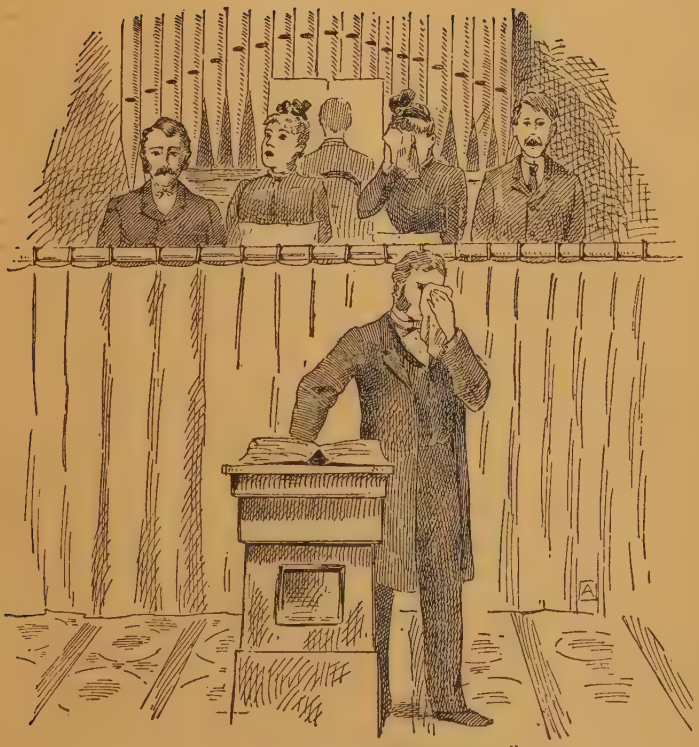
But she would make us take it; she said "if her Mother Gowdy wuz alive she would say to her:

" 'Sarah Ann, I'd ruther not be mourned for in bombazeen than to have the dear old meetin'-house in Jonesville go to destruction. Sell the dress, and mourn for me in a black calico.' "

That, Sister Gowdy said, would be, she knew, what Mother Gowdy would say to her if she wuz alive.

And we couldn't dispute Sarah Ann, for we all knew that old Miss Gowdy worked for the meetin'-house as long as she could work for anything. She loved the Methodist meetin'-house better than she loved husband or childern, though she wuz a good wife and mother. She died with cramps, and her last request wuz to have this him sung to her funeral:

"I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode,
The church our dear Redeemer bought
With his most precious blood."



"I LOVE THY KINGDOM, LORD."

The quire all loved Mother Gowdy, and sung it accordin' to her wishes, and broke down, I well remember, at the third verse:

"For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
For her my toil and life be given,
Till life and toil shall end."

The quire broke down, and the minister himself shed tears to think how she had carried out her belief all her life, and died with the thought of the church she loved on her heart and its name on her lips.

Wall, the dress would sell at the least calculation for eight dollars; the storekeeper had offered that, but Sarah Ann hoped it would bring ten to the fair.

It wuz a cross to Sarah Ann, so we could see, for she had loved Mother Gowdy dretful well, and loved the uncle who had gi'n it to her, and she hadn't a nice black dress to her back.

But she said she hadn't lived with Mother Gowdy twenty years for nothin', and see how she would always sacrifice anything and everything but principle for the good of the meetin'-house.

Sister Gowdy is a good-hearted woman, and we all on us honored her for this act of her'n, though we felt it wuz almost too much for her to do it.

Wall, Sister Gowdy wuz the last one to gin in her testimony, and havin' got through relatin' our experiences, we proceeded to business and paperin'.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MISTER SYLVESTER BOBBETT and I had been voted on es the ones best qualified to lead off in the arjuous and hazerdous enterprize.

And though we deeply felt the honor they wuz a-heapin' onto us, yet es it has been, time and ag'in, in other high places in the land, if it hadn't been for duty that wuz a-grippin' holt of us, we would gladly have shirked out of it, and gi'n the honor to some humble but worthy constituent.

For the lengths of paper wuz extremely long, the ceilin' fearfully high, and, oh! how lofty and tottlin' the barells looked to us. And we both on us, Sister Sylvester Bobbet and I, had gladly have shirked out of it, and gi'n the honor to some perched up on barells, a-liftin' our arms up fur, fur beyond the strength of their sockets.

But duty wuz a-callin' us, and the other wimmen also, and it wuzn't for me nor Sister Sylvester Bobbet to wave her nor them off, or shirk out of hazerdous and dangerous jobs when the good of the Methodist meetin'-house wuz at the bay.

No, with as lofty looks as I ever see in my life (I couldn't see my own, but felt 'em), and with as resolute and martyrous feelin's as ever animated two wimmen's hearts, Sister Sylvester Bobbet and I grasped holt of the length of paper, one on each end on it, Sister Arvilly Lanfear and Miss Henzy a-holdin' it up in the middle like Aaron and Hur a-holdin' up

Moses'es arms. We advanced, and boldly mounted up onto our two barells, Miss Gowdy and Sister Sypher a-holdin' two chairs stiddy for us to mount up on.

Every eye in the meetin'-house wuz on us. We felt nerved up to do our best, even if we perished in so doin', and I didn't know some of the time but we would fall at our two posts. The job wuz so much more wearin' and awful than we had foreboded, and we had foreboded about it day and night for weeks and weeks, every one on us.

The extreme hite of the ceilin'; the sliperyness and fragility of the lengths of paper; the fearful hite and tottlin'ness of the barells; the dizzeness that swept over us at times, in spite of our marble efforts to be calm. The dretful achin' and strainin' of our armpits, that bid fair to loosen 'em from their four sockets. The tremenjous responsibility that laid onto us to get the paper on smooth and onwrinkled.

It wuz, takin' it altogether, the most fearful and wearisome hour of my hull life.

Every female in that room held her breath in deathless anxiety (about thirty breaths). And every eye in the room wuz on us (about fifty-nine eyes—Miss Shelmadine hain't got but one workin' eye, the other is glass, though it hain't known, and must be kep').

Wall, it wuz a-goin' on smooth and onwrinkled—smiles broke out on every face, about thirty smiles—a half a minute more and it would be done, and done well. When at that tryin' and decisive moment when the fate of our meetin'-house wuz, as you may say, at the stake, we heard the sound of hurryin' feet, and the door suddenly opened, and in walked Josiah Allen, Deacon Sypher and Deacon Henzy followed by what seemed to me at the time to be the hull male part of the meetin'-house.

But we found out afterwards that there wuz a few men in the meetin'-house that thought wimmen ort to set; they

PAPERIN' THE MEETIN'-HOUSE.

argued that when wimmen had been standin' so long they ort to set down; they wuz good dispositioned. But, as I sez at the time, it looked to us as if every male Methodist in the land wuz there and present.

They wuz in great spirits, and their means wuz triumphant and satisfied.

They had jest got the last news from the Conference in New York village, and had come down in body to disseminate it to us.

They say the Methodist Conference had decided that the seven wimmen that had been stood up there in New York for the last week couldn't set, that they wuz too weak and fragile to set on the Conference.

And then the hull crowd of men, with smiles and haughty linements, beset Josiah to read it out to us.

So Josiah Allen, with his face nearly wreathed with a smile, a blissful smile, but as high-headed a one as I ever see, read it all out to us. But he should have to hurry, he said, for he had got to carry the great and triumphant news all round, up as far as Zoar, if he had time.

And so he read it out to us, and as we see that that breadth wuz spilte, we stopped our work for a minute, and heard it.

And after he had finished it, they all said it wuz a masterly dockument, the decision wuz a noble one, and it wuz jest what they had always said. They said they had always known that wimmen wuz too weak, her frame wuz too tender, she wuz onfitted by nater, in mind and in body, to contend with such hardship. And they all agreed that it would be puttin' the men in a bad place, and takin' a good deal offen their dignity, if the fair sect had been allowed by them to take such hardships onto 'em. And they sez, some on 'em, "Why, what are men in the Methodist meetin'-house for if it hain't to guard the more weaker sect, and keep cares offen 'em?"

And one or two on 'em mentioned the words "cooin' doves"

and "sweet tender flowerets," as is the way of men at such times. But they wuz in too big a hurry to spread themselves (as you may say) in this direction. They had to hurry off to tell the great news to other places in Jonesville, and up as fur as Loontown and Zoar.

THE CONFERENCE HAD DECIDED THAT WIMMEN WUZ TOO WEAK TO SET.

But Sister Arvilly Lanfear, who happened to be a-standin' in the door as they went off, she said she heard 'em out as fur as the gate a-congratilatin' themselves and the Methodist meetin'-house and the nation on the decision, for, sez they:

"Them angels hain't strong enough to set, and I've known it all the time."

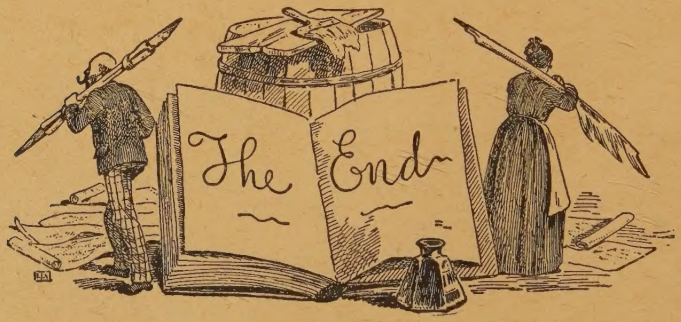
And Sister Sylvester Gowdy sez to me, a-rubbin' her achin' armpits:

"If they are as beet out as we be they'd be glad to set down on anything—a Conference or anything else."

And I sez, a-wipin' the persperati'n of hard labor from my forwerd:

"For the land's sake! Yes! I should think so."

And then, with giddy heads and strainin' armpits, we tackled the meetin'-house ag'in.



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